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CHECKS

TO

ANTINOMIANISM.

BY

THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.



VOLUME IV.

CONTAINING,

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| I. REMARKS ON MR. TOPLADY'S SCHEME
OF CHRISTIAN AND PHILOSOPHI-
CAL NECESSITY. | III. THE LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMI-
ANISM; OR, A POLEMICAL ESSAY
ON THE TWIN DOCTRINES OF
CHRISTIAN IMPERFECTION, AND
A DEATH PURGATORY. |
| II. AN ANSWER TO THE REV. MR. TOP-
LADY'S VINDICATION OF THE DE-
CREES. | |



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A

REPLY

TO THE

PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS

BY WHICH

THE CALVINISTS AND THE FATALISTS

SUPPORT THE DOCTRINE OF

ABSOLUTE NECESSITY:

BEING

REMARKS

ON

THE REV. MR. TOPLADY'S

"SCHEME OF CHRISTIAN AND PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY."



Beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit.

Col. ii. 8.

INTRODUCTION.



MR. Voltaire, at the head of the Deists abroad ; President Edwards and Mr. Toplady, at the head of the Calvinists in America and Great Britain ; and Dr. Hartley, seconded by Dr. Priestley and Mr. Hume, at the head of many ingenious philosophers ; have of late years joined their literary forces to bind man with what Mr. Toplady calls "*Ineluctabilis ordo rerum*"—or "*the extensive series of adamantine links,*" which form the chain of "*absolute necessity*:"—An invisible chain this, by which, if their scheme be true, God and Nature irresistibly bind upon us all our thoughts and actions ; so that no good man can absolutely think or do worse—no wicked man can at any time think or do better—than he does, each exactly filling up the measure of unavoidable virtue or vice, which God, as the first cause or the predestinating and necessitating author of all things, has allotted to him from all eternity.

Mr. Toplady triumphs in seeing the rapid progress which this doctrine makes by the help of the above-mentioned authors, who shine with distinguished lustre in the learned world. "Mr. Wesley," says he, "laments that *Necessity* is 'The scheme, which is now adopted by not a few of the most sensible men in the nation.' I agree with him as to the fact. But I cannot deplore it as a calamity. The progress which that doctrine has of late years made, and is still making in the kingdom, I consider as a most happy and promising symptom, &c."

I flatter myself that I shall by and by show, upon theological principles, the mischievous absurdity of that spreading doctrine, in an *Answer to Mr. Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees*. But, as he has lately published a book entitled, "*The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted, in opposition to Mr. J. Wesley's Tract on that Subject*;" and as he has advanced in that book some arguments taken

from Philosophy and Scripture, I shall now take notice of them.—To defend truth effectually, error must be entirely demolished. Therefore, without any farther apology, I present the lovers of truth with the following refutation of the grand error which supports the Calvinian and Voltairian Gospels.

REPLY, &c.



SECTION I.

A view of the doctrine of Absolute Necessity, as it is maintained by Mr. Toplady and his adherents.—This doctrine (as well as Manichæism) makes God the author of every sin.

CONTROVERTISTS frequently accuse their opponents of holding detestable or absurd doctrines which they never advanced, and which have no necessary connexion with their principles. That I may not be guilty of so ungenerous a proceeding, I shall, first, present the reader with an account of *Necessity* and her pedigree, in Mr. Toplady's own words.

Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity, page 13, 14, “If we distinguish accurately, this seems to have been the order in which the most judicious of the ancients considered the whole matter: First, *God*:—then, his *Will*:—then *Fate*; or the solemn ratification of his Will, by passing and establishing it into an unchangeable decree;—then *Creation*:—then *Necessity*; i. e. such an indissoluble concatenation of secondary causes and effects, as has a native tendency to secure the certainty of all events, as one wave is impelled by another:—then *Providence*; i. e. the omnipresent, omnivigilant, all-directing;” [he might have added *all-impelling*] “superintendency of divine wisdom and power, carrying the whole preconcerted scheme into actual execution by the subservient mediation of second causes, which were created for that end.”

This is the full view of the doctrine which the Calvinists, and the better sort of Fatalists, defend. I would only ask a few questions

* Mr. T. puts this clause in Latin; *Velut unda impellitur unda.*

upon it.—1. If all our actions, and consequently all our *sins*, compose the seventh link of the chain of Calvinism;—If the first link is *God*; the second, his *Will*; the third, his *Decree*; the fourth, *Creation*; the fifth, *Necessity*; the sixth, *Providence*; and the seventh, *Sin*; is it not as easy to trace the pedigree of *Sin* through *Providence*, *Necessity*, *Creation*, *God's Decree*, and *God's Will*, up to *God* himself; as it is to trace back the genealogy of the Prince of Wales, from George III. by George II. up to George I.? And upon this plan, is it not clear that *Sin* is as much the *real offspring of God* as the Prince of Wales is the real offspring of George the First?—2. If this is the case, does not Calvinism, or if you please, *Fatalism* or *Necessitarianism*, absolutely make *God* the *Author of Sin*, by means of his *Will*, his *Decree*, his *Creation*, his *Necessitation*, his *impelling Providence*? And, horrible to think! does it not unavoidably follow, that the monster *Sin* is the offspring of *God's Providence*—of *God's Necessitation*—of *God's Creation*—of *God's Decree*—of *God's Will*—of *God* himself?—3. If this Manichean doctrine be true, when Christ came to destroy sin, did he not come to destroy the work of *God* rather than the work of the *devil*? And when preachers attack *sin*, do they not attack *God's providence*—*God's necessitation*—*God's creation*—*God's decree*—*God's will*—and *God* himself?—4. To do *God* and his Oracles justice, ought we not to give the following scriptural genealogy of sin?—A *sinful act* is the offspring of a *sinful choice*;—a *sinful choice* is the offspring of *self-perversion*;—and *self-perversion* may or may not follow from *free will* put in a *state of probation*, or under a practicable law. When you begin at *Sin*, you can never ascend higher than *free will*: and when you begin at *God*, you can never descend lower than *free will*: thus, 1. *God*;—2. His *will* to make free willing, accountable creatures;—3. His putting his will in execution by the actual *Creation* of such creatures;—4. *Legislation* on *God's* part;—5. Voluntary, unnecessitated *obedience*, on the part of those who make a good use of their free will;—And 6. Voluntary unnecessitated *disobedience*, on the part of those who make a bad use of it. Hence it is evident, that, by substituting *necessity* for *free will*, and *absolute decrees* for *righteous legislation*, Mr. Toplady breaks the golden chain which our gracious Creator made, and helps Manes, Augustin, Calvin, Hobbes, Voltaire, Hume, Dr. Hartley, and Dr. Priestley, to hammer out the iron-clay chain, by which they hang sin upon *God* himself.—5. If all our sins, with all their circumstances and aggravations, are only a part of “the whole preconcerted scheme,” which “divine wisdom and power,” absolutely and irresistibly “carry into actual execution, by the subservient mediation of second causes, which were created for that end;” who can

rationally blame sinners for answering *the end* for which they were absolutely created? Who can refuse to exculpate and pity the reprobates, whom *all-impelling* omnipotence carries into sin, and into hell, as irresistibly as a floating cork is carried towards the shore by tossing billows which necessarily *impel* one another? And who will not be astonished at the erroneous notions which the consistent Fatalists have of their God?—A God this, who *necessitates*, yea, *impels*, men, to sin by his will—his decree—his necessitation—and his providence, then gravely weeps and bleeds over them for sinning:—and after having necessitated and impelled the non-elect to disbelieve and despise his blood, will set up a judgment-seat to damn them for *necessarily carrying his preconcerted scheme into actual execution*, as “*second causes which were created for that end?*”

“Oh! but they do it *voluntarily* as well as *necessarily*, and therefore they are accountable and judicable.”—This Calvinian salvo makes a bad matter worse. For, if *all their sins* are necessarily brought about by God’s all-impelling decree, *their willing* and bad choice are brought about by the same *preconcerted, irresistible* means; one of the ends of God’s *necessitation*, with respect to the reprobate, being to make them sin with abundantly *greater* freedom and choice than if they were not *necessitated* and *impelled* by God’s predestinating, efficacious, irresistible decree. This Mr. Toplady indirectly asserts in the following argument.

Page 15. “They” [man’s actions—*man’s sins*] may be, at one and the same time, free and necessary too. When Mr. Wesley is very hungry and tired, he is necessarily, and yet freely, disposed to food or rest. His *will* is—concerned in sitting down to dinner, or in court-ing repose, when *necessity* impels to either.—*Necessarily* biassed as he is to those mediums of recruit, he has recourse to them as freely, (i. e. as voluntarily, and with as much *appetite, choice, desire, and relish,*) as if *necessity* were quite out of the case; nay, and with abundantly *greater* freedom and choice, than if he was not so necessitated and impelled.”

Is not this as much as to say, “As *necessitation*, the daughter of God’s decree, *impels* Mr. Wesley to eat, by giving him an appetite to food; so it formerly impelled Adam, and now it impels all the reprobates, to *sin*, by giving them an appetite to wickedness: and, *necessarily* biassed as *they* are to adultery, robbery, and other crimes, they commit them “as freely, i. e. with as much *appetite* and *choice*, as if *necessity* were quite out of the case: nay, and with *abundantly greater* freedom and choice, than if they were not so necessitated and impelled?”—Is not this reviving one of the most impious tenets of the

Manichee's?—Is it not confounding the Lamb of God with the old dragon, and coupling the celestial dove with the infernal serpent?

If you ask, "Where is the flaw of Mr. Toplady's argumentative illustration?" I answer, it has two capital defects: 1. That God's will, his decree, and his providence, *impel* Mr. Wesley to eat when he is hungry, is very true; because eating, in such a case is, in general, Mr. Wesley's duty, and reminding him of his want of nourishment, by the sensation which we call hunger, is a peculiar favour, worthy of the Parent of good to bestow. But the question is, whether God's will, decree, and providence *impelled* Adam to choose the forbidden fruit rather than any other, and excited David to go to Uriah's wife, rather than to his own wives? How illogical, how detestable is this conclusion! God *necessitates* and *impels* us to do our *duty*; and therefore, he *necessitates* and *impels* us to do *wickedness*!—But 2. The greatest absurdity belonging to Mr. Toplady's illustration is, his pretending to overthrow the doctrine of *free will*, by urging the hunger which God gives to Mr. Wesley, in order to *necessitate* and *impel* him to eat, according to the decree of Calvinian *necessitation*, which is absolutely *irresistible*. Mr. T. says, page 13, "*We call that necessary, which cannot be otherwise than it is.*" Now Mr. Wesley's eating when he is hungry, is by no means *Calvinistically* necessary: for he has a hundred times reversed the decree of his hunger by fasting; and if he were put to the sad alternative of the woman, who was to starve, or to kill and eat her own child, he both could and would go full against the necessitation of his hunger, and never eat more. Mr. Toplady's illustration, therefore, far from proving that God's necessitation *irresistibly impels* us to commit *sin*, indirectly demonstrates, that God's necessitation does not so much as *absolutely* impel us to do those things, which the very laws of our constitution and nature themselves bind upon us, by the strong *necessity* of self-preservation. For some people have so far resisted the urgent calls of nature and appetite, as not only to make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, but even literally to starve themselves to death.

I once saw a man who played the most amazing tricks with a pack of cards. His skill consisted in so artfully shuffling them, and imperceptibly substituting one for another, that when you thought you had fairly secured the king of hearts, you found yourself possessed only of the knave of clubs. The defenders of the doctrine of necessity are not less skilful. I shall show in another tract, with what subtlety Mr. T. uses "*permission*" for *efficacy*,—"no salvation due," for *eternal torments ensured*;—"not enriching," for *absolute reprobation*;—and "*passing by*," for *absolutely appointing to remediless sin*, and

everlasting burnings. Let us now consider the grand, logical substitution, which deceives that gentleman, and by which he misleads the admirers of his scheme.

Page 14. "I acquiesce in the old distinction of *necessity* [a distinction adopted by Luther and others] into a *necessity of compulsion*, and a *necessity of infallible certainty*.—We say of the earth, for instance, that it circuits the sun by *compulsory necessity*. The *necessity of infallible certainty* is of a very different kind, and only renders the event *inevitably future*, without any *compulsory force* on the will of the agent."—If Mr. T. had said, "The *necessity of true prophecy*, considers an event as *certainly future*; but puts no Calvinian, irresistible bias on the will of the agent;" I would have subscribed to his distinction. But instead of the words *truly certain*, or *certainly future*, which would have perfectly explained what may improperly be called *necessity of true prophecy*, and what should be called *certain futurity*; instead of those words, I say, he artfully substitutes, first "*infallibly certain*," and then "*inevitably future*." The phrase, *infallibly certain*, may be admitted to pass, if you understand by it *that which does not fail to happen*: but if you take it in a rigid sense, and mean by it, that which *cannot absolutely fail to happen*, you get a step out of the way, and you may easily go on shuffling your logical cards, till you have imposed *Fatalism* upon the simple, by making them believe, that *certainly future*, *infallibly future*, and *inevitably future*, are three phrases of the same import; whereas the difference between the first and the last phrase is as great, as the difference between Mr. Wesley's scriptural doctrine of *free will*, and Mr. T.'s Manichean doctrine of *absolute necessity*.

It is the property of error to be inconsistent. Accordingly we find that Mr. T. after having told us (p. 14.) that the *necessity of infallible certainty*, which renders the event *inevitably future*, lays *no compulsory force on the will of the agent*, tells us in the very same page that his Calvinian necessity is "*such an indissoluble concatenation of secondary causes—[created for that end]—and of effects, as has a native tendency to secure the certainty of events*" [i. e. of all volitions, murders, adulteries, and incests] "*sicut unda impellitur unda*;" *as one wave impels another*—or, as the first link of a chain which you pull, draws the second—the second, the third—and so on. Now, if all our volitions are *pushed forward by God* through the means of his *absolute will*—his *irresistible decree*—his *efficacious creation*—and his *all-conquering necessitation*, which is nothing but an adamantine chain of second causes created by *Providence*, in order to produce absolutely all the effects which are produced, and to make them *impel*

each other "*as one wave impels another*;" we desire to know, how our volitions can be thus *irresistibly impelled* upon us "without any *compulsory* force on our will." I do not see how Mr. T. can get over this contradiction, otherwise than by saying, that, although God's necessitation is *irresistibly impulsive*, yet it is not at all *compulsory*; although it *absolutely impels* us to will, yet it does not in the least *compel* us to be willing. But would so frivolous, so absurd a distinction as this, wipe off the foul blot which the scheme of necessity fixes on the Father of lights, when it represents him as the first cause, and the grand contriver of all our sinful volitions?

Mr. T. pp. 133, 134, among other pieces of Manicheism, gives us the following account of that strange religion. "There are two independent gods, or infinite principles: viz.—light, and—darkness. The first is the author of all good: and the second, of all evil.—The evil God made sin.—The good God and the bad God wage implacable war against each other; and perpetually clog and disconcert one another's schemes and operations. Hence men are *impelled*, &c. to good, or to evil, according as they come under the power of the good deity, or the bad one."—Or, to speak Calvinistically, They are necessarily made willing to believe and obey, if they are the elected objects of everlasting love, which is the *good* principle; and they are irresistibly made willing to disbelieve and disobey, if they are the reprobated objects of everlasting wrath, which is the *evil* principle. For free will has no more place in Manicheism than it has in Calvinism. Hence it appears, that setting aside the other peculiarities of each scheme, the grand difference between Calvin and Manes, consists in Calvin's making everlasting, electing, necessitating *love*, and everlasting, reprobating, necessitating *wrath*, to flow from the same divine principle; whereas Manes more reasonably supposed, that they flow from two contrary principles. Whoever therefore denies *free will*, and contends for *necessity*, embraces, before he is aware, the capital error of the Manichees: and it is well, if he do not hold it in a less reasonable manner than Manes himself did. "I believe," adds Mr. Toplady, "it is absolutely impossible to trace quite up to its source, the antiquity of that hypothesis, which absurdly affirms the existence of two eternal, contrary, independent principles.—What led so many wise people, and for so great a series of ages, into such a wretched mistake; were chiefly, I suppose, these two considerations: 1. That evil, both moral and physical, are *positive* things, and so must have a *positive cause*.—2. That a Being, perfectly good, could not, from the very nature of his existence, be the *cause* of such bad things."

Here Mr. Toplady reasons like a judicious divine. The misfortune for his scheme is, that his "two considerations," like two millstones, grind Calvinism to dust: or, like two cogent arguments, force us to embrace the doctrine of free will, or the error of Manes. Mr. T. seems aware of this; and therefore, to show that God can, upon the Calvinian plan, absolutely predestinate, and effectually bring about sin, by making men willing to sin in the day of his irresistible power; and that nevertheless he is *not* the author and first cause of sin;—To show this, I say, Mr. T. asserts, "That evil, whether physical or moral, does not, upon narrow inspection, appear to have *so much of positivity in it*, as it is probable those ancients supposed." Nay, he insinuates that, as "sickness is a *privation* of health;" so the sinfulness of any human action is said to be a *privation*;" being called *avopia*, *illegality*;—and he adds, that, wonderful as the thing may appear, Dr. Watts, in his Logic, "ventures to treat of sin under the title of *not-being*."* When Mr. Toplady has thus cleared the way, and modestly intimated that sin, being a kind of non-entity, can have no *positive cause*, he proposes the grand question, "Whether the great *First Cause*, who is infinitely and merely good, can be, either *efficiently or deficiently*, the author of *them*," i. e. [according to the context] the author of *iniquity, injustice, impiety, and vice*; as well as the author of the natural evil by which God punishes sin?

Page 139. Mr. T. answers this question thus: "In my opinion, the single word *permission* solves the whole difficulty, as far as it can be solved, &c." and page 141. he says, "We know scarce any of the views which induced uncreated goodness to *ordain* (for, &c. I see no great difference between *permitting* and *ordaining*) the *introggression*, or more properly, the *intromission* of evil." Here Mr. Toplady goes as far as he decently can: rather than grant that we are endued with *free will*, and that when God had made angels and men *free-willing* creatures, in order to judge them according to their own works, he could not, without inconsistency, rob them of free will by *necessitating* them to be either good or wicked;—rather, I say, than admit this Scriptural doctrine, which perfectly clears the gracious Judge of all the earth, Mr. Toplady first indirectly and decently extenuates sin, and brings it down to *almost* nothing; and then he tells us that God *ordained* it. Is not the openness of Manes preferable to this Calvin-

* If the Calvinists, in their unguarded moments, represent sin as a kind of *not-being*, or *non-entity*, that they may exculpate God for absolutely ordaining it, do they not by this mean exculpate the sinner also? If the *first* cause of sin is excusable, because sin is a *privation*, and has "*not so much of positivity in it*" as the ancients supposed; is not the *second* cause of sin much more excusable on the same account?

istic winding?—When Mr. T. grants, that God “*ordained*” sin, and when he charges “*the intromission of evil*” upon God, does he not grant all that Manes in this respect contended for? And have not the Manichean Necessitarians the advantage over Mr. T. when they assert, that a principle, which absolutely ordains, yea, necessitates sin and all the works of darkness, is a *dark and evil* principle? Can we doubt of it, if we believe these sayings of Christ, *Out of the [evil] heart proceed evil thoughts, &c. By their works you shall know them.—The tree is known by its fruit?*

Again: If “*sin*,” or rather the sinfulness of an action, may be properly called a “*not being*” or a *non-entity*, as Mr. Toplady inconsistently insinuates, page 137. it absurdly follows, that crookedness, or the want of straightness in a line, is a mere *privation* also, or a *not-being*; whereas reason and feeling tell us, that the crookedness of a crooked line is something every way as positive as the straightness of a straight line. To deny it, is as ridiculous as to assert, that a circle is a *not-being*, because it is not made of straight lines like a square; or that a murder is a species of *non-entity*, because it is not the legal execution of a condemned malefactor. Nor can Mr. T. mend his error by hiding it behind “*Dr. Watts’s logic*,” for the world knows that Dr. Watts was a Calvinist when he wrote that book; and therefore, judicious as he was, the veil of error prevented him from seeing *then* that part of the truth which I contend for:

Once more: Whether sin has a positive cause or not, (for Mr. T. insinuates both these doctrines, with the inconsistency peculiar to his system,) I beg leave to involve him in a dilemma, which will meet him at the front or back door of his inconsistency. Either sin is a real thing, and has a positive cause: or it is *not* a real thing, and has no positive cause. If it is not a real thing, and has no positive cause; why does God positively send the wicked to hell for a *privation*, which they have not *positively caused*? And if sin is a real thing, or a positive moral crookedness of the will of a sinner, and as such has a positive cause; can that positive cause be any other than the *self-perversion* of free will, or the *impelling decree* of a sin-ordaining God? If the positive cause of sin is the *self-perversion* of free will, is it not evident that so sure as there is sin in the world, the doctrine of *free will* is true? but if the positive cause of sin is the *impelling decree* of a *sin-ordaining*, sin-necessitating God; is it not incontestable, that the capital doctrine of the Manichees, the doctrine of *absolute necessity*, is true; and that there is in the Godhead an *evil* principle, (it signifies little whether you call it *matter*, *darkness*, *everlasting free wrath*, or *devil*,) which positively ordains and irresistibly causes sin? In a

word, is it not clear, that the second Gospel axiom is overthrown by the doctrine of *necessity*; and that the damnation of sinners is of God, and not of themselves?

While Mr. T. tries to extricate himself from this dilemma, I shall produce one or two more passages of this book, to prove that his scheme makes God the author of sin, according to the most dangerous error of Manes. The Heathens imagined that Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, was Jupiter's offspring in the most peculiar manner. Diana was indeed Jupiter's daughter, but Latona, an earthly princess, was her mother. Whereas Jupiter was at once the father and mother of Minerva. He begat her himself in the womb of his own brain, and when she was ripe for the birth, his forehead opened after a violent headach, which answered to the pangs of child-bearing, and out came the lovely female deity. Mr. Toplady, alluding to this heathen fiction, represents his Diana, *Necessity*, as proceeding from God with her immense chain of events, which has among its adamantine links, all the follies, heresies, murders, robberies, adulteries, incests, and rebellions, of which men and devils have been, are, or ever shall be, guilty. His own words, page 50. are, "Necessity, in general, with all its extensive series of adamantine links in particular, is, in reality, what the poets feigned of Minerva, the issue of Divine Wisdom:" [he should have said, the issue of the supreme God, by his own wise brain] "deriving its *whole existence from the free will of God*; and its *whole effectuosity from his never-ceasing providence*." Is not this insinuating, as plainly as decency will allow, that every sin, as a link of the adamantine chain of events, has been hammered in heaven, and that every crime "*derives its whole existence from the free will of God?*" Take one more instance of the same Manichean doctrine.

Page 64. Mr. Toplady having said, that *He [God] casteth forth his ice like morsels—and causeth his wind to blow, &c.* adds, "Neither is material nature alone bound fast in fate. All other things, the human will itself not excepted, are *not less tightly bound, i. e. effectually* influenced and determined."—Hence it is evident, that if this Calvinism be true, when sinners send forth volleys of unclean and profane words, Calvin's God has as "tightly bound" them to cast forth Manichean ribaldry, as the God of nature binds the clouds to *cast forth his ice like morsels*.

I would not be understood to demonstrate by the preceding quotations, that Mr. T. *designs* to make God the author of sin. No: on the contrary, I do him the justice to say, that he does all he can to clear his doctrines of grace from this dreadful imputation. I only

produce his own words to show, that, notwithstanding all his endeavours, this horrid Manichean consequence unavoidably flows from his *scheme of necessity*.

SECTION II.

Mr. T. attempts to support his scheme of absolute Necessity by PHILOSOPHY.—His philosophical error is overthrown by fourteen arguments.—What truth comes nearest to his error.

WE have taken a view of the Scheme of Necessity, and seen how it represents God, directly or indirectly, as the *First Cause* of all sin and damnation. Consider we now, how Mr. T. defends this scheme by rational arguments as a philosopher.

Page 22. "The soul is, *in a very extensive degree*, passive as matter is:"—Here Mr. Toplady, *in some degree*, gives up the point. He is about to prove that the soul is not *self-determined*; and that, as our bodily organs are *necessarily* and *irresistibly* affected by the objects which strike them; so our souls are *necessarily* and *irresistibly* determined by our bodily organs, and by the ideas which these organs *necessarily* raise in our minds when they are so affected. Now, to prove this, he should have proved that our souls are *altogether as passive* as our bodies. But, far from proving it, he dares not assert it: for he allows, that the soul is passive as matter, only *in a very extensive degree*: and therefore, by his own concession, the argument on which he is going to rest the notion of the absolute passiveness of the soul with respect to self-determination, will be at least *in some degree* groundless. But let us consider this mighty argument, and see if Mr. T.'s limitation frees him from the charge of countenancing materialism "*in a very extensive degree*."

Page 22. "The senses are *necessarily* impressed by every object from without; and as *necessarily* commove the fibres of the brain: from which nervous commotion ideas are *necessarily* communicated to, or excited in, the soul; and by the judgment which the soul *necessarily* frames of those ideas, the will is *necessarily* inclined to approve or disapprove, to act or not to act. If so, where is the boasted power of self-determination?"

This Mr. Toplady calls "a Survey of the soul's *dependence* on the body." Page 27, he enforces the same doctrine in these words: "The human body is *necessarily* encompassed by a multitude of *other* bodies. Which other surrounding bodies, animal, vegetable, &c. so far as we come within their perceivable sphere, *necessarily* impress

our nerves with sensations correspondent to the objects themselves. These sensations are necessarily, &c. propagated to the soul, which can no more *help* receiving them, and being affected by them, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning.

“Now, 1. If all the ideas in the soul derive their existence from sensation ; and 2. If the soul depend absolutely on the body for all those sensations ; and 3. If the body be both primarily and continually dependent on other extrinsic beings for the very sensations which it [the body] communicates to the soul ;—the consequence seems to me undeniable, that neither man’s mental nor his outward operations are *self-determined* ; but, on the contrary, determined by the views with which an infinity of surrounding objects *necessarily*, and almost incessantly impress his intellect.”

These arguments bring to my mind St. Paul’s caution, *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit*. That Mr. T.’s scheme is founded on a vain philosophy will, I hope, appear evident to those who weigh the following remarks.

I. This scheme is contrary to genuine philosophy, which has always represented the soul as able to resist the strongest impressions of the objects that surround the body ; and as capable of going against the wind and tide of all the senses. Even Horace, an effeminate disciple of Epicurus, could say, in his sober moments,

Justum et tenacem propositi virum, &c.

“Neither the clamours of a raging mob, nor the frowns of a threatening tyrant ;—neither furious storms, nor roaring thunders, can move a righteous man, who stands firm to his resolution. The wreck of the world might crush his body to atoms, but could not shake his soul with fear.” But Mr. T.’s philosophy sinks as much below the poor heathen’s, as a man who is perpetually borne down, and carried away by every object of sense around him, is inferior to the steady man, whose virtue triumphs over all the objects which strike his senses.

II. This doctrine unmans man. For reason, or a power morally to regulate the appetites which we gratify by means of our senses, is what chiefly distinguishes us from other animals. Now, if outward objects *necessarily* bias our senses, if our senses *necessarily* bias our judgment, and if our judgment *necessarily* bias our will and practice : what advantage have we over beasts ? May we not say of *reason*, what heated Luther once said of free will ; that it is an empty name, a mere non-entity ? Thus Mr. Toplady’s scheme of philosophical necessity, by rendering reason useless, saps the very foundation of all

moral philosophy, and hardly allows man the low principle of conduct which we call instinct in brutes. Nay, the very brutes are not so affected by the objects which strike their senses : but they often run away, hungry as they are, from the food which tempts their eye, their nose, and their belly, when they apprehend some danger, though their senses discover none. Beasts frequently act in full opposition to the sight of their eyes ; but the wretched scheme, which Mr. T. imposes upon us as *Christian philosophy*, supposes that all men necessarily think, judge, and act, not only according to the sight of their eyes, but according to the impressions made by matter upon all their senses. How would heathenish fatalists themselves have exploded so carnal a philosophy !

III. As it sets aside *reason*, so it overthrows *conscience*, and the *light which enlightens every man that comes into the world*. For, of what use is conscience ? Of what use is the internal light of grace, which enlightens conscience within, if man is necessarily determined from *without* ; and if the objects which strike his senses irresistibly turn his judgment and his will, insomuch that he can no more resist their impression “ than a tree can resist the stroke of lightning ? ”

IV. As this scheme leaves no room for morality, so it robs us of the very essence of God's natural image, which consists chiefly in *self-activity*, and *self-motion*. For, according to Mr. T.'s philosophy, we cannot take one step, no not in the affairs of common life, without an irresistible, necessitating impulse. Yea, with respect to self-activity, he represents us as inferior to our watches : They have their spring of motion *within themselves*, and they can go alone, if they are wound up once in twenty-four hours. But, if we believe Mr. T. our spring of motion is *without us* : nay, we have as many springs of motion as there are objects around us ; and these objects necessarily wind up our will from moment to moment. For, by necessarily moving our senses, they necessarily move our understanding ; our understanding necessarily moves our will ; and our will necessarily moves our tongues, hands, and feet. Thus our will and body, like the wheels and body of a coach, never move but as they are moved, and cannot help moving when they are acted upon. How different is this mechanical religion from the spiritual religion which the learned and pious Dr. H. More inculcates in these words ! “ The first degree of the divine image was *self-motion*, or *self-activity*. For mere passivity ; or to be moved or acted by another, without a man's will, &c. is the condition of such as are either dead or asleep ; as to go of a man's self is a symptom of one alive, or awake.—Men that are dead drunk, may be haled, or disposed of, where others please ; ”

—To be irresistibly acted upon, is then to be “deprived of that degree of life, which is *self-activity*, or the doing of things from an inward principle of free agency; and therefore it is to be, so far, in a state of death.”

Nor will Mr. T. mend the matter by urging, that our *understanding* and our *will* are first *necessarily* moved and determined by the objects that surround us. For the motion of a coach drawn by horses, and driven by a coachman, is not the less mechanical, because the smooth axle-tree, and the oiled wheels, being *first* set in motion, move the whole coach by readily yielding to the impulse of the external mover. Were such wheels as full of consciousness, and willingness, as the mystic wheels of Ezekiel’s vision; yet so long as they moved by absolute necessity, or by an *oil of willingness* irresistibly applied to them from without, their motion would not be more commendable than that of a well-suspended and oiled wheel, which the touch of your finger moves round its axis. It turns indeed freely, and (according to supposition) willingly: but yet; as it wills and moves irresistibly and passively, its moving and willing are merely mechanical. So easy and short is the transition from the scheme of absolute necessity to that of universal mechanism!

V. If Mr. T.’s scheme of necessity be true, all sin may be justly charged upon Providence, who, by the “surrounding objects which necessarily impress our intellect,” causes sin as truly, and as irresistibly, as a gunner causes the explosion of a loaded cannon, by the lighted match which he applies to the touchhole. And Eve was unwise when she said, *The serpent beguiled me and I did eat*: for she might have said: “Lord, I have only followed the appointed law of my nature: for providentially coming within sight of the tree of knowledge, I perceived that the fruit was good for food, and pleasant to the eye. It *necessarily* impressed my nerves with correspondent sensations; these sensations were necessarily and instantaneously propagated to my soul; and my soul could no more *help* receiving these forcible impressions, and eating in consequence of them, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning.” I should be glad to know, with what justice Eve could have been condemned after such a plea, if Mr. T.’s scheme be true; especially if she had urged, as Mr. T. does, p. 14. that God’s *necessitation* gives birth to “*providence* ;” *i. e.* to the all-directing superintendency of divine wisdom and power, carrying the whole preconcerted scheme into actual execution, by the subservient mediation of second causes,” [such as the fair colour of the fruit, and the eye of Eve] “*which were created for that end.*” Can

any man say that if Mr. T. be right, Eve would have *charged God foolishly*?

However, if Eve did not know how to exculpate herself properly, according to the doctrine of divine necessitation, Mr. Toplady knows how to reduce his Gospel to practice; and therefore, in an humorous manner, he justifies his illiberal treatment of his opponent, thus; [p. 10.] "Mr. Wesley imagines, that, upon my own principles, I can be no more than *a clock*. And if so, how can I help *striking*?" He himself has several times smarted for coming too near the pendulum.—What a sweet and profitable Gospel is this! Who would wonder, if all who love to *strike their fellow-servants* should embrace Mr. Toplady's system, as a comfortable "doctrine of grace," by which sin may be humorously palliated, and *striking* sinners completely justified?

VI. It is contrary to Scripture: for if man be necessarily affected, and irresistibly wrought upon, or led by the forcible impression of external objects, Paul spake like a heretical *free willer* when he said, *All things [indifferent] are lawful for me: but I will not be brought under the power of any.*—How foolish was this saying, if he could no more help being brought under the irresistible power of the objects which surrounded him, than a tree can help being struck by the lightning?

VII. It is contrary to common sense: how can God reasonably set life and death, water and fire, before us, and bid us choose *eternal life* and *living water*, if surrounding objects work upon us as the lightning works upon a tree on which it falls? And when the Lord commands the reprobates to choose virtue, after having bound them over to vice by the *adamantine chain* of necessitation, does he not insult over their misery, as much as a sheriff would do, who, after having ordered the executioner to bind a man's hands, to fasten his neck to the gallows, and absolutely to drive away the cart from under him, should gravely bid the wretch to choose life and liberty, and bitterly exclaim against him for *neglecting so great a deliverance*?

VIII. It is contrary to the sentiment of all the churches of Christ, except those of *necessitarian* Rome and Geneva: for they all *reasonably* require us to renounce the pomps of the world, and the alluring sinful baits of the flesh. But, if these pomps and baits work upon us by means of our senses, as necessarily, and determine our will as irresistibly, as lightning shivers a tree, can any thing be more absurd than our baptismal engagements? Might we not as well seriously vow never to be struck by the lightning in a storm, as solemnly vow

never to be led by, or follow, the vanities of the world and the sinful lusts of the flesh?

IX. It represents the proceedings of the day of judgment as the most unrighteous, cruel, and hypocritical acts, that ever disgraced the tribunal of a tyrant. For if God, by eternal, absolute, and necessitating decrees, places the reprobates in the midst of a current of circumstances, which carries them along as irresistibly as a rapid river wafts a feather;—if he encompasses them with tempting objects, which strike their souls with ideas that cause sin in their hearts and lives, as inevitably as a stroke of lightning raises splinters in the tree which it shatters;—and if we *can no more help* being determined by these objects, which God's providence has placed around us on purpose to determine us, than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning, it unavoidably follows, that when God will judicially condemn the wicked, and send them to hell for their sins, he will act with as much justice as the king would do, if he sent to the gallows all his subjects who have had the misfortune of being struck with lightning. Nay, to make the case parallel, we must suppose, that the king has the absolute command of the lightning, and had previously struck them with the fiery ball, that he might subsequently condemn them to be hanged for having been struck according to his absolute decree.

Should the reader, who is not yet initiated into the mystery of the Calvinian decrees, ask, if it be possible that rigid *bound willers* should fix so horrible a blot upon the character of the *Judge of all the earth*? I answer in the affirmative; and I prove by the following words of Mr. Toplady, that, if Calvinism be true, the pretended sentence, which the Judge shall pass in the great day, will be only a *publication* or *ratification* of the everlasting decrees by which a Manichean deity absolutely necessitates some men to repent and be saved, and others to sin and be damned. “Christ,” says Mr. Toplady, in his Zanch. p. 87. “will then properly sit as a Judge; and openly *publish*, and solemnly *ratify* his *everlasting decrees*, by receiving the elect, &c. into glory; and by passing sentence on the non-elect, [&c.] for their wilful ignorance of divine things, and their obstinate unbelief, &c.”—It is true, that after the word *non-elect*, Mr. T. adds in a parenthesis these words, [“not for having done what they could not help.”] But it is equally true, that he had no more right to add this parenthesis, than I have to say, that the lightning is at my command: for throughout his Scheme of Necessity, he attempts to prove, that man is not *self-determined*, but *irresistibly determined by some other being*, viz. by God, who absolutely determines him by “*second causes created for that end*”;—forcible causes these, whose impressions are so strong

that we “*can no more help receiving them*” [and being determined by them] “*than a tree can resist a stroke of lightning.*” Besides, if the non-elect are damned “*for their obstinate unbelief,*” as Mr. T. tells us in this quotation ; and if it is as impossible for them to believe as to make a world, [an absurd maxim this—which is inculcated by rigid bound willers] it is evident that the non-elect can no more help their unbelief than they can help their incapacity to create a world.

X. Mr. Toplady's *Scheme of Necessity* places *matter* and its impressions far above *spirit* and its influence. If his philosophy be true, every material object around us, by making necessary, irresistible impressions upon our minds, necessarily determines our will, and irresistibly impels our actions. According to his system therefore, we cannot resist the powerful influence of matter. But, if we believe the Scriptures, we can resist the *Holy Ghost*, and do despite to the *Spirit of grace*. Now, what is this but to represent *matter* [which is the God of the *Materialists*, and the evil God of the *Manichees*] as more active, quick, and powerful, than *Spirit* ? Yea, than the *Holy Spirit* ?

Mr. Toplady may indeed say, that the material objects, by which we are absolutely determined, are only God's tools, by which God himself determines us : but, though this salvo may so far reconcile the scheme of *necessity* to itself ; it will never reconcile it to such scriptures as these. *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did.—I would have gathered you, and ye would not.* And, what is still worse, it represents God as working Manichean iniquity by common adulterers and robbers, as forcibly as a miller grinds his corn by the use he makes of a current of air or a stream of water.

XI. The scheme of philosophical necessity which I attack supposes, that God, to maintain order in the universe, is obliged to necessitate all events, from the wagging of a dog's tail, or the rise of a particle of dust, to the murder of a king, or the rise of an empire. Thus Mr. T. tells us in his preface to Zanchius, (p. 4.) “*Bishop Hopkins did not go a jot too far in asserting,*” that “*not a dust flies on a beaten road, but God raiseth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and, by his particular care, conveys it to the certain place he had before appointed for it : nor shall the most fierce and tempestuous wind hurry it any farther.*” I object to this puerile system ; 1. Because it absurdly multiplies God's decrees ; rendering them not only as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, and the particles of dust on beaten roads ; but also as countless as all the motions of each grain of sand and particle of dust in all ages. At this rate, a large folio volume could not contain all the decrees of God concerning the least particle of dust ;

—its rises and falls ;—its stops and hinderances ;—its situations and modifications ;—its whirlings to the right or to the left, &c. &c.—And 2. Because it represents God as being endued with less wisdom than a prudent king, who can maintain good order in his kingdom, without making particular laws or decrees to necessitate every erucation of his drunken soldiers, or every puff of his smoking subjects ; and without ordaining every filthy jest, which is uttered from the ale-bench, appointing every loud invective which disturbs Billingsgate, and predestinating every wry face which the lunatics make in Bedlam.

XII. But what I chiefly dislike in this scheme is, its degrading all human souls in such a manner as to make them receive their moral excellence and depravity from the *contexture* of the brains by which they work, and from the place of the bodies in which they dwell. Insomuch that all the difference there is between one who thinks loyally, and one who thinks otherwise ;—between one who believes that Christ is God over all, and one who believes that he is a mere creature, consists only in the make and position of their brains. Supposing, for example, that a gentleman has honourable thoughts of his king and of his Saviour ; and is ready, from a principle of loyalty and faith, to defend the dignity of George the Third, and the divinity of Jesus Christ :—Supposing also, that another gentleman breaks without ceremony these two evangelical precepts, *Honour the king*,—*Let all the angels of God worship him* [Christ ;]—I ask, Why is their moral and religious conduct so opposite ? Is it because the first gentleman's free-willing soul has intrinsically more reverence for the king and for our Lord, because he keeps his heart more tender by faith and prayer, and his conscience more devoid of prejudice, through a diligent improvement of his talent, or through a more faithful use of his free agency, and a readier submission to the light that enlightens every man ?—No such thing ; if Mr. T.'s scheme be true, the whole difference consists in "*mud walls*," and external *circumstances*.

Page 33. "The soul of a Monthly Reviewer, if imprisoned within the same *mud walls* which are tenanted by the soul of Mr. John Wesley, would, similarly *circumstanced*, reason and act, (I verily think) exactly like the bishop of Moorfields."—And, pp. 34, 35, he adds, "I just now hinted the conjecture of some, that a human spirit incarcerated in the brain of a cat would probably both think and behave as that animal does. But how would the soul of a cat acquit itself, if enclosed in the brain of a man ? We cannot resolve this question with certainty any more than the other."—Admirable

divinity! So! Mr. Toplady leaves the orthodox in doubt:—1. Whether, when their souls, and the souls of cats, shall be let out of their respective brains or prisons, the souls of cats will not be equal to the souls of men:—2. Whether, supposing the soul of a cat had been put in the brain of St. Paul, or of a Monthly Reviewer, the soul of “puss” would not have made as great an apostle as the soul of Saul of Tarsus;—as good a critic as the soul of the most sensible Reviewer:—And 3. Whether, in case the “human spirit” [of Isaiah] “were shut up in the skull of a cat: puss would not, notwithstanding, move prone on all four, purr when stroked, spit when pinched, and birds and mice be her darling objects of pursuit.” P. 34.—Is not this a pretty large stride for the first towards the doctrine of the sameness of the souls of men with the souls of cats and frogs? Wretched Calvinism, new-fangled doctrines of grace, where are you leading your deluded admirers!—your principal vindicators! Is it not enough that you have spoiled the fountain of living waters, by turning into it the muddy streams of Zeno’s errors? Are ye also going to poison it by the absurdities of Pythagoras’s philosophy?—What a side stroke is here inadvertently given to these capital doctrines, *God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul,—a soul made in the image of God, and not in the image of a cat:—The spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth:—But the spirit of man goeth upward: it returns to God who gave it, with an intention to judge and reward it according to its moral works?*

But I must do Mr. Toplady justice: he does not yet recommend this doctrine as absolutely certain. However, from his capital doctrine, that human souls have no free will—no inward principle of self-determination; and from his avowed opinion, that the soul of one man placed in the body of another man, “would, similarly circumstanced, reason and act exactly like” the man in whose *mud walls* it is lodged; it evidently follows, 1. That, had the human soul of Christ been placed in the body and circumstances of Nero, it would have been exactly as wicked and atrocious as the soul of that bloody monster was: And 2. That if Nero’s soul had been placed in Christ’s body, and in his trying circumstances, it would have been exactly as virtuous and immaculate as that of the Redeemer: the consequence is undeniable. Thus, the merit of the *man* Christ did not in the least spring from his righteous soul, but from his “*mud walls*,” and from the happiness which his soul had of being lodged in a “*brain peculiarly modified*.” Nor did the demerit of Nero flow from his free agency and self-perversion; but only from his “*mud walls*,” and from the infelicity which his necessitated soul had of being lodged

in an *ILL* “*constructed vehicle*,” and placed on that throne on which Titus soon after deserved to be called *the darling of mankind*. See, O ye engrossers of orthodoxy, to what absurd lengths your aversion to the liberty of the will, and to evangelical worthiness, leads your unwary souls! And yet, if we believe Mr. Toplady, your scheme, which is big with these inevitable consequences, is Christian Philosophy, and our doctrine of free will is “philosophy run mad!”

XIII. If our thoughts and actions necessarily flowed from the modifications of our brains, and from the impressions of the objects around us, it would necessarily follow, that as most men throughout the whole world, see the sun bright, snow white, and scarlet red;—or as most men taste aloes bitter, vinegar sour, and honey sweet: so most men would think, speak, and act nearly with the same moral uniformity, which is perceivable in their bodily organs, and in the objects which affect those organs: and it would be as impossible to improve in virtue, by a proper exertion of our powers, and by a diligent use of our talents, as it is impossible to improve the whiteness of the snow, or our power to see it white, by a diligent use of our sight. At this rate too, conversion would not be so much a reformation of our spiritual habits as a reformation of our brains.

XIV. But the worst consequences are yet behind: For if God work upon our souls in the same manner in which he works upon matter; if he raises our ideas, volitions and passions, as necessarily as a strong wind raises the waves of the sea, with their roar, their foam, and their other accidents; in a word, if he works as absolutely and irresistibly upon spirit as he does upon matter; it follows, that spirit and matter, being governed upon the same principles, are of the same nature; and that if there be any difference between the soul and the body, it is only such a difference as there is between the tallow which composes a lighted candle, and the flame which arises out of it. The light flame is as really matter, as the heavy tallow, and the ponderous candlestick; and all are equally passive and subject to the laws of *absolute necessity*. Again,

If virtue and vice necessarily depend on the modification of our brains, and the objects which surround us, it follows, that the effect will cease with the cause, and that bodily dissolution will consign our virtue or vice to the dust, into which our brains and bodily organs will soon be turned; and that when the souls of the righteous, and the souls of the wicked, shall be removed from their “mud walls,” and from the objects which surround those mud-walls, they will be (nearly at least) on a level with each other, if they are not on a level with the souls of cats and dogs.

Lest Mr. Toplady's admirers should think, that prejudice makes me place his mistakes in too strong a light, I shall close these arguments by the judgment of the Monthly Reviewers.—In their Review for 1775, they give us the following abridged account of Mr. Toplady's *Scheme of Necessity*.

“The old controversy concerning *Liberty* and *Necessity* has lately been renewed: Mr. Toplady avows himself a strenuous, and very positive champion on the side of necessity, and revives those arguments which were long since urged by Spinoza, Hobbes, &c.” [two noted infidels, or rather atheistical materialists] “It is somewhat singular in the history of this dispute, that those who profess themselves the friends of Revelation should so earnestly contend for a system which unbelievers have very generally adopted and maintained.—This appears the more strange, when we consider, that the present assertors of *Necessity* manifest a very visible tendency to *Materialism*. Fate and universal mechanism seem to be so nearly allied, that they have been usually defended on the same ground, and by the same advocates. Mr. T——y indeed admits, that the two component principles of man, body and soul, ‘are not only distinct, but essentially different from each other.’ But it appears in the sequel of his reasoning, that he has no high opinion of the nature and powers of the latter [the soul.] ‘An idea, he observes, is that image, form, or conception of any thing, which the soul is impressed with from without: and he expressly denies that the soul has any power of framing new ideas, different from, or superior to those, which are forced upon it by the bodily senses. ‘The soul, he affirms, is in a very extensive degree passive as matter itself.’ On his scheme, the limitation with which he guards this assertion is needless and futile.”

While this Monthly Review is before me, I cannot help transcribing from it two other remarkable passages. The one occurs four pages after the preceding quotation. The correspondents of the Reviewers give them an account of an absurd and mischievous book, written by some wild atheistical philosopher abroad, who thinks that all matter is alive, that the earth is a huge animal, and that we feed upon it, as some diminutive insects do upon the back of an ass. “His moral doctrine,” say the Reviewers, “is of a piece with the rest: The result of his reasoning on the subject is, in his own words, that ‘man, in every instant of his duration, is a passive instrument in the hands of Necessity;’—Then let us drink and drive care away, drink and be merry, as the old song says; which is the practical application.”—I would not be understood to charge this application upon Mr. Toplady; I only mention it, after the Reviewers, as a natural consequence of his system of *Necessity*.

The other passage is taken from the Review of *Dr. Hartley's* Theory of the Human Mind*, published by Dr. Priestley, who pleads as strongly for *necessity* as Mr. Toplady himself.

“Materialism [say the Reviewers] has been, from early ages, considered as one of the chief bulwarks of Atheism. Accordingly, while Epicurus and Hobbes, and their disciples, have endeavoured to defend it, Theists and Christians have pointed their batteries against it.—But we learn from Dr. Priestley, that perception, and all the mental powers of man, are the result of such an organical structure as that of the brain.—How would Epicurus, how would Collins have triumphed, had they lived to see this point [that the mental powers of man result from such an organical structure as that of the brain] given up to them, even by a Christian Divine!—Another discovery, very consonant to the first, is, that the whole man becomes extinct at death. For this concession Atheists will likewise thank him, as it has been one of the chief articles of their creed from the beginning of the world.—Let us suppose, with Dr. Priestley, that all the mental powers of Julius Cesar resulted from the organical structure of his brain. This organical structure is dissolved, and the whole man, Julius Cesar, becomes extinct: the matter of this brain, however, remains, but it is not Julius Cesar; for he (*ex hypothesi*) is wholly extinct.”

Having produced a variety of arguments, which, I trust, will altogether have weight enough to sink Mr. Toplady's scheme of necessity to the bottom of the sea of error, where a vain Philosophy begat it on a monstrous body of corrupted Divinity, I shall conclude this section by setting my seal to the truths which border most upon Mr. Toplady's error, and by which he is deceived, according to the old saying, *Decipimur specie recti*, “We embrace falsehood under the deceitful appearance of some truth.”

Mr. Toplady is certainly in the right when he asserts, that there is a close connexion between our soul and body; and that each has a reciprocal influence on the other. We readily grant that a cheerful mind is conducive to bodily health, and that

Corpus onustum
Hesternis vitis animum quoque prægravat unâ,
Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ. *Hor.*

* Mr. Toplady, p. 148, intimates to his readers, that Dr. Hartley has written an “eminent defence of Necessity,” and promises himself “a feast of pleasure and instruction” in reading his book.

“The soul, which dwells in a body oppressed with last night's excess, is clogged by the load which disorders the body.” Nor do we deny, that, in a thousand cases, our bodies and our circumstances may prevent the full exertion of our spiritual powers, as the lameness of a horse, or its natural sluggishness, added to the badness of the road, may prevent the speed which a good rider could make, if he had a better horse and a better road. But to carry this consideration as far as Mr. Toplady does, is as absurd as to suppose, that the skill and expedition of a rider depend *entirely* on his beast, and on the goodness of the road. We likewise allow, that sometimes the soul may be as much overpowered by a disordered, dying body, as a rider, who is irresistibly carried away by a mad horse, or lies helpless under the weight of a dying horse. But in such cases, we do not consider the soul as accountable; as neither delirious persons, nor those who are dying of a paralytic stroke, are answerable for their actions and omissions in such peculiar circumstances.

In all other cases, history furnishes us with a variety of examples of men, who, through a faithful use of their talents, have overcome the infelicity of their constitution and circumstances; whilst others, by a contrary conduct, have perverted the most happy constitution, and the most fortunate circumstances in life. Thus Socrates, by improving his light, mastered an unhappy constitution, which in his youth carried him to violent anger, and an undue gratification of bodily appetites. And thus Solomon, by not improving his light, in his old age made shipwreck of the wisdom, temperance, and piety, that distinguished him in his youth. So Nero outlived the happy dispositions which made him shine in the former part of his life. And Manasses, by *humbling himself before the God of his fathers*, overcame in his old age the horrid and abominable propensities which constituted him a monster of iniquity in his youthful days.

Likewise with respect to the circumstances in which we are placed by Providence, I grant they have a considerable weight in the turn of our affections: nevertheless, this weight is by no means such as Mr. T. supposes. Diogenes might be as proud in his tub, as Alexander in his magnificent palace. A gown and band may cover a revengeful clergyman, whilst a star and garter shine on a benevolent courtier. Cornelius turned to God in the army; and the sons of Eli went after Satan in the temple. Domitian and Marcus Antoninus filled the same throne: where the one astonished the universe by his wickedness, as the other did by his virtue. Abraham and Agathocles were humble in the midst of riches; and too many beggars are proud in the depth of poverty. Some men are content in a sordid

cottage ; while others murmur in the most splendid palaces. The treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia was [it seems] converted in the vanity of a heathen court, whilst Judas was perverted in the company of Christ and his fellow-apostles. In short, whilst thousands, like Absalom, have turned out bad, notwithstanding the best instructions : numbers, like the Philippian jailer, have turned out well, maugre the worst education. Such is the power of free grace and free will. To lay therefore so much stress upon external circumstances, is to undo by overdoing, and to wiredraw the truth till it is refined into error.

Upon the whole, we have Scripture and experience on our side, when we assert that reason, conscience, the light which [in various degrees] enlightens every man, the general assistance of divine grace, and the peculiar or providential helps of God our Saviour, are more than sufficient savingly to overrule the infelicity of our bodily constitution, and our circumstances in life, if we are not wilfully and perversely wanting to ourselves : for, *of them to whom less is given, less will be required* : and the advantages or disadvantages under which we labour, shall all be taken into the account of our evangelical worthiness or unworthiness, in the day when God shall judge us according to the several editions of his everlasting Gospel, and according to the good or bad use which we make of his talents of nature and grace.

SECTION III.

Remarks upon the manner in which Mr. T. attempts to support his Scheme of Necessity from Scripture.—Twelve Keys to open the Scriptures on which he founds that Scheme.

WE have seen how Mr. T. has propped up his system by philosophical arguments : let us now see how he does it by scriptural proofs. Page 54. he says. “ No man can consistently acknowledge the divine authority of the Scriptures without—being an *absolute Necessitarian*.” To demonstrate this strange proposition, he produces among many more, the passages which mention the case of Joseph and his brethren, the Lord and Pharaoh, Eli and his sons, Absalom and his father’s wives, Shimei and David, Christ and his crucifiers, &c. As I have shown, in other publications, that these scriptures, when taken in connexion with the context and the tenor of the Bible, perfectly agree with the doctrines of *justice*, which are

inseparably connected with the doctrines of *free will* in man and *just wrath* in God ; I shall not swell this tract by vain repetitions, especially as Mr. T. does not support by argument the sense which he fixes on these passages. However, that the public may see what method he follows in trying to vindicate his error from Scripture, I shall present my readers with some keys by which they will easily open the scriptures which he misapplies, and discover the rotten foundation of Calvinism.

First Key. Detaching a passage of Scripture from the context, that what God does for particular reasons may appear to be done *absolutely*, and from *mere* sovereignty, is a polemical stratagem commonly used by the Calvinists. The first passage which Mr. T. produces, draws all its apparent conclusiveness from this artful method.

Page 56, "*I withheld thee from sinning against me, Gen. xx. 6.*" By quoting this detached clause, Mr. T. would insinuate, that whilst God *absolutely* ordains some men to sin, he *absolutely* withholds other men from sin. To see that his conclusion is unscriptural, we need only read the whole verse : *God said to him [Abimelech] in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the INTEGRITY OF THY HEART : for I also withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore I suffered thee not to touch her.* Now, who that adverts to the words in capitals, does not see, that God's keeping Abimelech from sinning, that is, from marrying Abraham's wife, was a REWARD of Abimelech's INTEGRITY, as well as of Abraham's piety ? Therefore, this very text proves, that God *rewards* upright free will with *restraining grace*, as well as with *glory* ; and not that man has no *free will*, and that he is made willing to work righteousness, or to commit sin, as necessarily as puppets are made to move to the right or to the left by the showman, who absolutely causes and manages their steps. Take another instance of the same stratagem :

Page 66. "*The Lord of hosts hath sworn, i. e. hath solemnly and immutably decreed, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass : and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.*"—Here Mr. Toplady breaks off the quotation, and leaves out what follows, *That I will break the Assyrian, i. e. the wicked in general, but particularly Sennacherib the proud, blaspheming king of Assyria, whose immense army was cut off in one night by an angel. "And upon my mountains tread him under foot, &c."*—By this mean Mr. T. makes his hasty readers believe, that God speaks of a Calvinian, absolute decree, founded upon Antinomian grace and free wrath ; and not of a judicial retributive decree, founded upon the humility of the righteous, and the

desert of the wicked ; though, verse 13, &c. the decree and its cause are thus expressly mentioned, *Thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, &c. I will be like the Most High, &c. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell.* When Mr. T. has hidden these keys to the doctrines of *justice*, which we defend, it is easy for him to apply to his doctrine of *free wrath* the peremptoriness of God's decree, and accordingly he triumphs much in these words, "*This is the purpose which is purposed upon all the earth, &c. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Isa. xiv. 24, &c. Who shall disannul God's purpose? [adds Mr. T.] Why, human free will, to be sure!—Who shall turn back God's hand? Human self-determination can do it with as much ease as our breath can repel the down of a feather!*" —This argument is full fraught with absurdity. Did we ever assert, that when free will has obstinately sinned, it can reverse an absolute decree of punishment? Do we not, on the contrary, maintain the proper exertion of justice in opposition to the Calvinian dreams of absolute election and reprobation, according to which the salvation of some notorious impenitent sinners is now actually finished, and the damnation of some unborn infants is now absolutely secured?

Page 67. By a similar method, Mr. T. tries to prove the doctrine of *necessitating free wrath*, thus: "*I have smitten you with blasting and mildew.—I have sent you the pestilence.—Your young men have I slain with the sword, Amos iv. 7—10.*"—But he forgets to tell us that this severity is not Calvinistical and diabolical, but righteous and judicially retributive; for the persons thus punished are said just before to be wicked men, *who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their masters, Bring [strong drink] and let us drink. Amos iv. 1.* Therefore all that can be inferred from these, and a thousand such scriptures, is, that when free agents have obstinately sinned, punishment overtakes them *whether they will or not.* And when the Calvinists ground their Manichean notions of a wrathful, absolute sovereignty in God upon such conclusions, they expose their good sense as much as I should expose my reason if I said, "*I can demonstrate that all robbers are absolutely necessitated to go on the highway, because when they are caught and condemned, they are absolutely necessitated to go to the gallows.*"

Second Key. Because God can do a thing, and does it on particular occasions, Mr. T. and his adherents infer, that he does it always. Thus to prove that God necessarily turns the hearts of all men at all times, and in all places, to sin or to righteousness; Mr. T. produces the following text.

Page 65. "*Even the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: and he turneth it whithersoever he will.* Prov. xxi. 1. Odd sort of *self-determination* this!"—We never denied the supreme power which God has even over the hearts of proud kings, who generally are the most imperious of men. When he will absolutely turn their will for the accomplishment of some providential design, his wisdom and omnipotence can undoubtedly do it. Thus by letting the Philistines loose upon Saul's dominions, God turned his heart, and made him change his design of immediately surrounding and destroying David. Thus he turned the heart of Ahasuerus from his purpose of destroying the Jews, by the providential reading of the records which reminded the king of the obligation he was under to Mordecai.—Thus he turned the heart of Pharaoh towards Joseph, by giving Joseph wisdom to explain his prophetic dream.—Thus again he turned the heart of Nebuchadnezzar from his purpose of destroying Daniel and all the wise men in Babylon, by enabling Daniel to tell and open the king's mysterious vision.—And when the king of Assyria was bent upon making war against the Israelites and the Ammonites, and cast lots to know which he should destroy first, *Rabbah* or *Jerusalem*, God providentially ordered the lot to fall upon guilty Jerusalem. Isa. x. 6, 7. Ezek. xxi. 21, &c. For, in such cases, "*The lot is cast into the lap*" without an eye to the Lord, "*but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*" Prov. xvi. 33. But these peculiar interpositions of Providence no more prove that God absolutely turns the hearts of *all* kings, and of *all* men in *all* things and on *all* occasions, as Mr. T.'s system supposes, than a farrier's drenching now and then a horse, in peculiar circumstances, proves that all horses throughout the world never drink but when they are drenched.

Third Key. The Necessitarians confound our inability to do *some* or *all* things with an inability to do *any* thing. Thus Mr. T. attempts to prove, that we can do nothing but what we are *necessitated* to do, and that "*Christ himself was an absolute Necessitarian*" by the following argument:

Page 71. "*Thou canst not make one hair white or black.—Your Father, &c. makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.* Surely, man can neither promote nor hinder the rising of the sun, and the falling of the rain."—But to conclude that all things are *absolutely* necessary, because we cannot alter the colour of our hair, command the clouds, and hasten sun-rising, is as absurd as to conclude, that a dier cannot absolutely alter the colour of the silks which he dyes, because he

cannot change the colour of his own hair or eyes. It is as ridiculous as to infer that we cannot move a pebble because we cannot stir a mountain :—that we cannot turn our eyes like men because we cannot turn our ears like horses :—and that we have no immediate command of our thoughts and hands, because we have no immediate command of the clouds and the sun. When Mr. T. imposes such a philosophy upon us, is he not as grossly mistaken as Mons. Voltaire, his companion in Necessitarianism, who gives us to understand, that because pear-trees can bear no fruit but pears, men can bear no moral fruit but such as they actually produce ; and that fate fixes our thoughts in our brains as necessarily as nature fixes our teeth in our jaw-bones ? How absurd is a system of philosophy, which ■ Voltaire and a Toplady are obliged to prop up by such weak arguments as these !

Fourth Key. The Calvinists suck scriptural metaphors till they imbibe the blood of error instead of *the sincere milk of the word*. And if I might compare scripture comparisons to rational animals, I would say, that Mr. T. makes them go upon all four. Hence it is that he says,

Page 58. “ *Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards, Job v. 7. And I am apt to think sparks ascend by necessity.* ”——By this method of arguing, I can demonstrate that Christ was clothed with feathers ; for he says, *I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her brood.* “ And I am apt to think ” that ■ hen is covered with feathers. However, I grant to Mr. T. that there is a necessity of *fallen nature* : according to this necessity man is born to die, and in the mean time he is exposed to the troubles which naturally accompany mortality. But there are ■ thousand troubles which flow from immorality, and which God puts it in man’s power to avoid. To deny this, is to deny the following scriptures : *He that will love his life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil :—let him eschew evil, and do good ; let him seek peace and ensue it.* 1 Pet. iii. 10, 11.—*Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles.* Prov. xxi. 23. It is therefore absurd and unscriptural to suppose, that because we cannot avoid every trouble in life, all canting gossips are absolutely bound to bring upon themselves all the troubles which their slanderous, lying tongues pull down upon their own heads.

Fifth Key. If there occur in the Bible a poetical expression, founded upon some common, though erroneous opinion, to which the sacred penmen accommodate their language in condescension to the vulgar, Calvinism fixes upon that expression, and produces it as a

demonstration of what she calls *Orthodoxy*. Thus Mr. T. [p. 57.] builds his scheme on the following text.

“*The stars in their course fought against Sisera.* Judg. v. 20.” It is as absurd to prove fatalism from these words, as it would be to prove that the earth is the fixed centre of our planetary system, by quoting the above-mentioned words of our blessed Lord, *Your father makes his sun to rise on the just*. The best philosophers, as well as Christ, to be understood by the common people, say, agreeably to a false philosophy, *The sun rises*, though they know that it is the earth which turns round on her axis towards the fixed sun. As we say *The Crown*, when we mean the reigning king; and put *heaven* for the king of heaven; so Deborah poetically said in her song, *The stars in their courses*, for the providential power which keeps the planets in their courses. Herein she probably adapted her language to some false notions of astrology, which the Israelites had received from the Egyptians. And all that she meant was, that God had peculiarly assisted the Israelites in their battle with Sisera.

Sixth Key: As the Necessitarians build their doctrine upon poetical expressions, so they do upon *proverbial* sayings. Thus,

Page 88. Mr. Toplady endeavours to support the doctrine of absolute necessity, or of the Calvinian decrees, by these words of our Lord, “*There shall not a hair of your head perish.* Luke xxi. 18. i. e. before the appointed time.” But this scripture does not prove, that God from all eternity made particular decrees, to appoint that men should shave so many times every week, and that such and such a hair of our head or beard should be spared so long, or should be cut off after having grown just so many days. This text is only a *proverbial* phrase, like that which is sometimes used among us, “I will not give way to error a hair’s breadth.” As this expression means only, “I will *fully* resist error:” so the other only means, “You shall be *fully* protected:” therefore to build Calvinian necessity upon such a scripture, is to render the pillars of Calvinism as contemptible as the hairs which the barber wipes off his razor, when he shaves my mistaken opponent.

Seventh Key. The word *shall* frequently implies a kind of necessity, and a forcible authority: Thus, a master says to his arguing servant, “You *shall* do such a thing: I will make you do it, whether you will or not.” Mr. Toplady avails himself of this idea to impose his scheme of necessity upon the ignorant. I say upon the ignorant, because he quotes again and again passages where the word *shall* has absolutely no place in the original. For example,

Pp. 84, 87, 92. he tries to prove, that Christ was "an absolute Necessitarian," by the following texts. "*I send unto you prophets, &c. and some of them ye SHALL kill, and some of them SHALL ye scourge: One of you, &c. SHALL betray me.—Ye all SHALL be offended because of me.—Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also*" [from a principle of superior kindness, or of remunerative favour] "*I MUST bring: and they SHALL hear my voice.—I must, and they shall.* What is this but double necessity?" In these, and in many such scriptures, the word *ye SHALL kill, &c.* in the original is a BARE *future* tense: And for want of such a tense in English, we are obliged to render the words which are in that tense by means of the words *shall* or *will*. These auxiliary words are often used indiscriminately by our translators, who might as well in the preceding texts have rendered the Greek verbs *WILL kill—WILL scourge—WILL betray—WILL be offended—WILL hear my voice*. Therefore, to rest Calvinism upon such vague proofs, is to rest it upon ■ defect in the English language, and upon the presumption that the reader is perfectly unacquainted with the original.

Eighth Key. As Mr. T.'s scheme partly rests upon ■ supposition that his readers are unacquainted with the Greek grammar, so it supposes that they are perfect strangers to ancient geography. Hence it is that he says, p. 89. "Our Lord knew her [the woman of Samaria] to be one of his elect:—And that she might be converted precisely at the very time appointed, *He must needs go through* the territory of Samaria, John iv. 4." Mr. Whitefield builds his peculiar orthodoxy on the same slender foundations, where he says, "Why *must* Christ *needs* go through Samaria?—Because there was a woman to be converted there." See his works, Vol. iv. p. 356. Now the plain reason why our Lord went through Samaria was, that he went from Jerusalem to Galilee; and as Samaria lies exactly between Judea and Galilee, *he must needs go through Samaria*, or go a great many miles out of his way. Absurdity itself therefore could hardly have framed a more absurd argument.

Ninth Key. One of the most common mistakes, on which the Calvinists found their doctrine, is confounding a *necessity of consequence* with an *absolute necessity*. A necessity of consequence is the necessary connexion which immediate causes have with their effects—immediate effects with their causes—and unavoidable consequences with their premises. Thus, if you run a man through the heart with a sword, by *necessity* of natural consequence he *must* die: and if you are caught, and convicted of having done it like an assassin, by necessity of legal consequence *you must* die.—Thus again, if I hold that God from all eternity absolutely fixed his everlasting love upon

some men, and his everlasting wrath upon others, without any respect to their works : by necessity of *logical* consequence, I must hold, that the former were never children of wrath, and must continue God's pleasant children, while they commit the most atrocious crimes ; and that the latter were children of wrath, while they semi-nally existed together with the man Christ in the loins of sinless Adam before the fall.

Now these three strong *necessities of consequence* do not amount to one grain of *Calvinian absolute necessity* : because though the above-mentioned effects and consequences necessarily follow from their causes and premises, yet those causes and premises are not absolutely necessary. To be more plain : Though a man, whom you run through the heart to rob him without opposition, *must* die ; and though you *must* suffer as a murderer for your crime, yet this double necessity does not prove that you were absolutely necessitated to go on the highway, and to murder the man. Again : Though you *must* [indirectly at least] propagate the most detestable error of Manes, [i. e. the worship of a double-principled Deity] if you preach a God made up of *absolute, everlasting love* to some, and of *absolute, everlasting wrath* to others, yet you are not necessitated to do this black work ; because you are by no means necessitated to embrace and propagate this black principle of Calvin.—Once more ; By necessity of consequence, a weak man who drinks to excess is drunk ; yet his drunkenness is not Calvinistically necessary ; because though the man cannot help being drunk if he drinks to excess, yet he can help drinking to excess : or, to speak in general terms, though he *cannot* prevent the effect when he has admitted the cause ; yet he can prevent the effect by not admitting the cause. However, Mr. Toplady, without adverting to this obvious and important distinction, takes it for granted that his readers will subscribe to his doctrine of *absolute necessity*, because a variety of scriptures assert such a *necessity of consequence* as I have just explained. Take the following instances.

P. 83. “How can ye escape the damnation of hell?” These words of Christ do not prove Calvinian reprobation and *absolute necessity* ; but only that those, who will obstinately go on in sin, shall [by necessity of consequence] infallibly meet with the damnation of hell.—P. 91. “If the Son shall make you free,” [and he shall make us free, if we will continue in his word] “ye shall” [by necessity of consequence] “be free indeed.”—Again, p. 92. “Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because” [whilst you hug your prejudices] “ye cannot hear my word,” [with the least degree of candour.] This passage does not prove Calvinian necessity ; it declares only, that while the

Jews were biased by the love of honour, rather than by the love of truth, by *necessity of consequence*, they could not candidly hear, and cordially receive Christ's humbling doctrine. Thus he said to them, *How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another?*

Ibid. "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."—Here is no Calvinism, but only a plain declaration, that, by *necessity of consequence*, no man can serve two masters: no man can gladly receive the truths of God who gladly receives the lies of Satan.—Ibid. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." That is, You eagerly follow the prince of darkness: *The works of your father, the devil, ye will* do*: and therefore by *necessity of consequence*, ye cannot do the works of God:—ye cannot follow me:—ye cannot rank among my sheep. Again:

P. 93. "I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, John x. 28. i. e. Their salvation is *necessary*, and cannot be hindered."—True: It is necessary, but it is only so by *necessity of consequence*; for damnation follows unbelief and disobedience as *punishment* does *sin*; and eternal salvation follows faith and obedience as *rewards* follow *good works*. But this no more proves that God necessitates men to sin or to obey, than hanging a deserter, and rewarding a courageous soldier, prove that the former was absolutely necessitated to desert, and the latter to play the hero.—Once more.

P. 94. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, whom the world CANNOT receive,"—[as a Comforter, without a proper preparation.] Now this no more proves that the world cannot absolutely receive the Comforter, than my asserting, that Mr. Toplady could not take a degree at the University, before he had learned grammar, proves that he was for ever absolutely debarred from that literary honour. If the reader be pleased to advert to this distinction between a *necessity of consequence* and *absolute necessity*, he will be able to steer safe through a thousand Calvinian rocks.

Tenth Key. The preceding remark leads us to the detection of another capital mistake of the orthodox, so called. They perpetually confound NATURAL necessity with what may (improperly speaking) be called MORAL necessity. By *natural* necessity infants are born naked, and colts are foaled with a coat on; men have two legs, horses four, and some insects sixteen. And by *moral* necessity servants are bound to obey their masters, children their parents, and subjects their king.

* Our Lord, when he spake these words, did not use a bare future *ποιήσετε*, which Mr. T. would perhaps have triumphantly translated *ye SHALL do*; putting the word *SHALL* in large capitals; but *θελετε ποιεῖν*, a phrase this which is peculiarly expressive of the obstinate choice of the *free-willing* Jews.

Now can any thing be more unreasonable than to infer that servants can no more help obeying their masters, than children can help being born with two hands?—Is it not absurd thus to confound *natural* and *moral* necessity? This however Mr. T. frequently does; witness the following scriptures, which he produces in defence of *absolute* necessity.

Page 62, &c. “*He [the Lord] made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.—By the breath of God frost is given. JOB.—He maketh grass to grow.—He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes:—Who can stand before his cold?—He causeth his wind to blow.—Fire and hail, snow and vapour, &c. fulfil his word. Ps.*” From these and the like scriptures, Mr. T. infers, that all things happen “by a *necessity* resulting from the will and providence of the supreme First Cause?”

That nothing happens independently on that Cause, and on the providential laws which God has established, we grant. But this does not prove at all the Calvinian necessity of *all* our actions. Nor does it prove that man, who is made in God's image, cannot, within his narrow sphere, frequently exert his delegated power at his own option, by making and executing *his own decrees*.

If Mr. T. denies it, I appeal to his own experience and candour. Can he not, by a good fire, reverse, in his apartment, God's decree of frost in winter; and by a candle, can he not in his room reverse God's decree of darkness at midnight? Can he not by icy, cooling draughts, elude the decree of heat in summer?—Nay, cannot a gardener, by skilfully distributing heat to vegetables in a hot-house, force a pineapple to ripen to perfection in the midst of winter? And, by means of a watering-pot, can he not command an artificial rain to water his drooping plants in the greatest drought of summer?—Again: Cannot a philosopher, acquainted with the secret laws of nature, imitate, as often as he pleases, most decrees of the God of nature? Can he not form and collect dews, by raising artificial vapours in an alembic? Can he not, when he has a mind, cause diminutive thunder and lightning by means of an electrical machine? Can he not create ice, snow, and hoarfrost, by nitrous salts? Can he not produce little earthquakes, by burying in the ground iron-filings and sulphur mixed with water? And whilst he raises a wind by managing a communication of rarified air with condensed air, cannot a smith do it without half the trouble by working his bellows?—Once more: Cannot a physician do in the little world within you, what a philosopher does without you in the world of nature? By availing himself of some natural law, is it not in general as much in his power, if you submit to his *decrees*, to

raise an artificial blister on your back, as it is in your gardener's to raise a sallad in your garden? By skilfully setting the powers of nature at work, can he not cleanse your intestines, as yonder farmer scours his ditches? Can he not, in general, assuage your pains by lenitives, or lull them asleep by opiates?—Can he not, through his acquaintance with the means by which God preserves the animal world, often promote the secretion of your fluids, and supply the want of those which are exhausted? Nay, can you not do it yourself, by using that cheap medicine, *exercise*; and by taking those agreeable boluses and pleasant draughts which you call *meat* and *drink*? To say that nature cannot be, in many respects, assisted, and even improved by art, is to say, that there are neither houses nor cities in the world; neither shoes on our feet, nor clothes on our back. And to affirm, that the works of art are as absolutely *necessary* as the works of nature, is to confound *Nature* and *Art*, and to advance one of the most monstrous paradoxes that ever disgraced human reason.

Eleventh Key. Confusion reigns in every corner of Babel. Another capital mistake of the Necessitarians consists in their confounding *Prophetic* certainty with *Absolute* necessity. An illustration will explain my meaning.

Mr. Toplady discovers a boy who is obstinately bent upon theft. From his knowledge of the force of indulged habits, he foresees and foretells that the boy will one day come to the gallows: and his prediction is fulfilled. The question is, did Mr. T.'s foresight, or his prophecy *necessitate* the thievish boy to indulge his wicked habit; and might not that boy have done like many more? Might he not have reformed, and died in his bed? Calvinism answers in the negative, but Reason and Scripture agree to declare, that a clear foresight and a bare prophecy, are not of an absolutely *necessitating* nature; and that, of consequence, it is as absurd to confound *absolute necessity* with *certainty of prophecy* (if I may use this expression) as it is to confound the *free* abode of the keepers in Newgate with the *necessary* abode of the felons who are confined there under bars and locks;—in a word, it is as absurd as to confound the *necessity* of an event, with the *certainty* of it. Your awkward servant has, at various times, broken you a number of China plates: That the plates are broken is *certain*, but that they were *Calvinistically* broken, i. e. that your servant could *no ways avoid* breaking them *all*, precisely in the manner, place, and instant, in which they were broken, is a proposition as absurd as the proof which Mr. T. [page 85] draws from the following sentences of Scriptures to demonstrate that our Lord was Calvinistically necessitated to lay down his life for us: “*How then shall the Scriptures be*

fulfilled, that thus it must be? Matt. xxvi. 54.—*All this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled, verse 56.*” To do these passages justice, we should consider three things :

1. The necessity of fulfilling the Scriptures, with respect to our Lord, could never amount to the least degree of *absolute*, Calvinian necessity ; for our Lord was no more obliged to give us the Scriptures in order to fulfil them, than Mr. T. is bound to give me a thousand pounds in order to get my thanks.

2. When we meet with such sayings as these, *This that is written must yet be accomplished in me :—The Scripture must be fulfilled, &c.* if they relate to Christ, they only indicate a *necessity of resolution*, if I may use this expression. Now a necessity of resolution is the very reverse of *absolute* necessity ; because a resolution is the offspring of free will, and may be altered by free will ; whereas Calvinian necessity never admits of a liberty or power to do a thing otherwise than it is done. I *resolve* to go out this evening, and I *write* my resolution, but this does not imply any absolute necessity : first, because I am at perfect liberty not to make such a resolution, and secondly, because I am at perfect liberty to break it, and I shall certainly do it, if some sufficient reason detains me at home.

Take a nobler example : God resolved to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan *for an everlasting possession*, and the divine resolution is written, Gen. xvii. 8, and xlviii. 4. But this does not imply the least degree of Calvinian necessity : for, 1. Reason dictates that God was no ways obliged to form such a resolution ; and 2. Experience teaches us, that the obstinacy of the Jews has obliged him to make them *know the breach* of his written resolution. Numb. xiv. 34. Accordingly they are scattered over all the world, instead of enjoying the promised land *for an everlasting possession*.

3. When prophetic sayings refer to the wicked, as in the following texts, ‘ *This cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled, which is written in the law ; They hated me without a cause.—The son of perdition is lost, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.—They believed not on him, that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled : Lord, who has believed our report ?—*’ These and the like passages denote only a *prophetic* necessity, founded upon God’s bare foresight of what will be ; but might as well [nay better] have been otherwise. Thus I *prophecy*, that through *logical* necessity I shall [in full opposition to *orthographical* necessity] put a colon, instead of a full point, at the end of the paragraph I am now writing. But this double necessity of *prophecy* and *logic* is so far from *absolutely* necessitating me, that I have almost a mind to follow the rules of punctuation, and to show

by this mean that I am as much at liberty to reverse my *prophetic, logical* decree, as God was to reverse his *prophetic, vindictive* decree, *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed* [:]

However, my decree is accomplished. What was an hour ago a future contingency, is now matter of fact. The preceding period is concluded without a full point as *certainly* as God exists. Should Mr. T. object that I could *foresee* this *contingent* event, because I had a mind to bring it about ; I reply that this does not invalidate my proof: For, 1. I foresaw this little event as contingent, and depending on my liberty, and of consequence I could not foresee it as absolutely necessary.—2. I have a clear foresight of many things in which I have no hand at all. Thus I foresee that a man condemned to be hanged for murder, shall certainly be hanged, whether I do the executioner's office or not. Though the murderer might be reprieved ; though he might make his escape, or poison himself before the day of execution ; yet, from my knowledge of the law, of the king's aversion to murder, of the strength of the prison, and of the particular care taken of condemned criminals, my foreknowledge that the condemned murderer shall be hanged amounts to a very high degree of certainty. Now, if I, whose foreknowledge, compared to the foreknowledge of God, is no more than a point to the infinity of space ;—If I, who am so short-sighted, can with such a degree of certainty foresee an event which is not absolutely necessary ; is it not *absurd*, I had almost said *impious*, to suppose that God's foreknowledge of events, which are not absolutely necessary, may not amount to *absolute necessity*? Cannot God foresee future events without necessitating them, a thousand times more clearly than I can foresee what I am sure I shall not *ordain*, much less *necessitate* ; namely, that Mr. T.'s prejudice will hinder him from treating Mr. W. with the respect due to an aged laborious minister of Christ ?

To deny that God's *certain* knowledge of future events is consistent with our liberty, because we cannot understand how God can *certainly* foresee the variations of our free will ;—to deny this, I say, is to deny the existence of all the things which we cannot fully comprehend. And at this rate, what is it that we shall not deny ? What is it that we perfectly understand ? Is there one man in ten thousand, that understands how astronomers can certainly foretell the very instant in which an eclipse will begin ? But does this ignorance of the vulgar render astronomical calculations less real or certain ? And may not God [by the good leave of the Necessitarians] surpass all men in his foreknowledge of the actions of free agents, as much as

Sir Isaac Newton surpassed all the Hottentots in his foreknowledge of eclipses ?

From these remarks it appears, that all the difficulties which the Calvinists have raised, with respect to the consistency of divine *foreknowledge* and human *free will*, arise from two mistakes : the first of which consists in supposing, that the simple, certain knowledge of an event, whether past, present or future, is necessarily connected with a peculiar influence on that event : and the second consists in measuring God's foreknowledge by our own, and supposing, that because we cannot prophesy with *absolute* certainty, what free-willing creatures will do to-morrow, therefore God cannot do it. A conclusion this, which is as absurd as the following argument : " We cannot create a grain of sand, nor comprehend how God could create it, and therefore God could neither create a grain of sand, nor comprehend how it was to be created."

I have dwelt so long upon this head, because it is the strong hold of the Calvinists, from which Mr. T. seems to bid defiance to every argument, witness his assertion, p. 80. "*Foreknowledge*, undarkened by the least shadow of *ignorance*, and superior to all possibility of *mistake*, is a link which draws *invincible necessity* after it."—To the preceding arguments, which, I trust, fully prove the contrary, I shall add one more, which is founded on the plain words of Scripture.

So sure as the Bible is true, Mr. T. is mistaken ; and God's foreknowledge, far from being connected with "*invincible necessity*," may exist, not only with respect to an event which is not necessary, but also with respect to an event which is so contingent, that it never comes to pass : take a proof of it.

We read, 1 Sam. xxiii. 10—12, that David, while he was in the city of Keilah, heard that Saul designed to come and surprise him there. *Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, &c. Will Saul come down, as thy servant has heard ? And the Lord said, He will come down. Then David said, Will the men of Keilah deliver me—into the hand of Saul ? And the Lord said, THEY WILL DELIVER THEE UP.* When David had received this double information, he went out of Keilah, and when Saul heard it, he did not come to Keilah, neither did the men of Keilah deliver him to Saul. From this remarkable occurrence we learn : 1. That future contingent events are clearly seen of God : 2. That this foresight of God has not the least influence on such events : 3. That God can foretell such events as contingent : and 4. That neither Scripture Prophecy, nor divine foreknowledge, have the least connexion with Mr. T.'s scheme of *absolute, invincible*

necessity; since God foreknew, that if David staid in Keilah, Saul would come down, and the men of Keilah, would deliver David into his hands. But so far was this clear foreknowledge, and peremptory prophecy of God, from “drawing *invincible necessity* after” them, that Saul did not come to Keilah: neither did the men of Keilah deliver David into his hands. I flatter myself, that, if the reader attend to these arguments, he will see that Mr. T.’s doctrine of an absolute connexion between the certain *foreknowledge* of events and their *invincible necessity*, is contradicted by experience, reason, and Scripture.

Twelfth Key. Because no child can help being born, when the last pang of his mother forces him into the light; and because no man can possibly live, when the last pang of death forces his soul into eternity, the Necessitarians conclude, that our every intermediate action, from our birth to our death, is irresistibly brought about by the iron hands of necessity. But is not their conclusion as absurd as the following argument: “*John the Baptist* could not speak when he was newly born, nor could he do it, when the executioner had cut off his head: *absolute necessity* hindered him from forming articulate sounds in the moment of his birth, and at the instant of his death; and therefore, all the days of his life *absolute necessity* made him move his tongue when he spake?” Let us see how Mr. T. handles this wonderful argument.

Pp. 102, 118. “Birth and death are the æra and the period, whose interval constitutes the thread of man’s visible existence on earth. Let us examine whether those important extremes be, or be not, unalterably fixed by the necessitating providence of God”—And by and by we are asked: “If the initial point from whence we start, and the ultimate goal which terminates our race, be divinely and unchangeably fixed; is it reasonable to suppose, that any free will, but the free will of *Deity alone*, may fabricate the intermediate links of the chain?”—That is, in plain English, “Does not God *alone* fabricate our every action, good or bad, from our cradle to our grave?”

Page 107, &c. Mr. T. produces such scriptures as these, to prove that the free will of *Deity alone* fabricates the link of our birth. “He [Jacob] said, *Am I in God’s stead to give [a barren woman] children?—They are my sons, whom God has given me.—Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.—Thou art He that took me out of the womb.—Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord.—Thou hast covered me, &c. in my mother’s womb.—In thy book all my members were written*”—

"God has fixed an exact point of time, for the accomplishment of all his decrees : among which fixed and exact points of time, are *a time to be born, and a time to die.*"

All these passages prove only, 1. That when a woman is naturally barren, like Rachel or Sarah, an *extraordinary* interposition of God's providence is necessary to render her fruitful :—2. That the fruitfulness of women, as that of our fields, is a gift of God :—3. That children grow in the womb, and come to the birth, according to the peculiar energy of those laws, which God, as the God of nature, has made for the propagation of animals in general, and of man in particular :—And, 4. That as there is *a time to be born*, namely, in general nine months after conception ; so there is *a time to die*, which in the present state of the world, is seventy or eighty years after our nativity ; if no peculiar event or circumstance hastens nor retards our birth and our death.

That this is the genuine meaning of the scriptures produced by Mr. T., I prove by the following arguments.

1. God could never Calvinistically appoint the birth of *all* children, without Calvinistically appointing their conception, and every mean conducive thereto : Whence it undeniably follows, that [if Calvinism is true] he absolutely appointed, yea necessitated, all the adulteries and whoredoms, with all the criminal intrigues and sinful lusts of the flesh, which are inseparably connected with the birth of base-born children. Now this doctrine makes God the grand author of all those crimes, and represents him as the most inconsistent of all law-givers : since, by his moral decrees, he forbids, and by his Calvinian decrees, he enjoins whoredom and adultery, in order to fabricate the link of the birth of every bastard child.

2. The experience of thousands of virgins shows, that by keeping themselves single, they may prevent the birth of a multitude of children ; and their parents may do it too, for St. Paul says, *He that standeth steadfast in his heart. having no [moral] necessity [from his daughter's constitution, or his own low circumstances] but hath power over his own will, and HATH SO DECREED IN HIS HEART, that he WILL KEEP his virgin, doth well.*

3. If women have conceived, by their carelessness or cruelty they frequently may so oppose one law of nature to another, as to reverse the decree of nature concerning the maturity of the fruit of the womb : Nor can Mr. T. avoid the force of this conclusion otherwise than by saying, that God necessitates such cruel mothers to destroy their unborn children, to fulfil the absolute decree which condemns their unhappy embryos to come to birth.

When Mr. T. has tried to prove that God has Calvinistically appointed the birth of all children, he tries to demonstrate, that the manner, moment, and circumstances of every body's death are so absolutely fixed, that no man can possibly live longer or shorter than he does. These are some of his arguments.

Page 110, "*The time drew near that Israel must die*, Gen. xlvii. 20."—Yes, he *must* die by necessity of consequence: for he was quite worn out; his age, which is mentioned in the preceding verse, being 147 years. We never dream that old, decrepit men are immortal. Again:

Pp. 111, 113. "*Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?—In whose hand is the soul of every living thing.—Man's days are determined; the number of his months is with thee: Thou hast appointed his bounds, which he cannot pass.—All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come*, Job vii. 1. xiv. 5—14.—*Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his term of life?* Matt. vi. 27."—None of these scriptures prove, that the free will of Deity alone has absolutely fabricated the link of every man's death. They only indicate, 1. That God has fixed general bounds to the life of vegetables and animals: For, as the *aloe* vegetates an hundred years: so *wheat* vegetates scarce twelve months; And as men in general lived seven or eight hundred years before the flood: so now the days of our life are threescore years, and ten; and if, by reason of strength, they are fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone, Ps. xc. 10. 2. That as no man lived a thousand years before the flood: so no man lives two hundred years now: And, 3. That, when we are about to die by necessity of consequence, &c. we cannot, without an extraordinary interposition of Providence, suspend the effect of this general decree, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. But to infer from such passages, that we cannot in general shorten our days by not taking a proper care of ourselves, or by running headlong into danger, is acting over again the part of the old deceiver, who said, "*Cast thyself down*" (from the pinnacle of the temple) "*for it is written,*" &c. From such Turkish philosophy, and murderous conclusions, God deliver weak, unwary readers!

Two arguments will, I hope, abundantly prove the falsity of this doctrine. The first is, God does not so fabricate the link of our death, but we may, in general, prolong our days by choosing wisdom, and shorten them by choosing folly. Is not the truth of this proposition immoveably founded upon such scriptures as these? *If thou seekest her [wisdom] as silver—then shalt thou understand every good path:—*

Length of days is in her hand, while untimely death is in the hand of fool-hardiness. Prov. ii. 4, 9. iii. 16.—*Keep my commandments, for length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add unto thee.* Prov. iii. 1, 2.—*Honour thy father and mother that thou mayest live long on the earth,* Eph. vi. 3.—*If thou wilt walk in my ways,—then will I lengthen thy days,* 1 Kings iii. 14.—*Their feet run to evil:—They lay wait for their own blood, and lurk privily for their own lives.* So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain: which taketh away the life of the owners thereof. Prov. i. 16, &c.—*A sound heart is [in many cases] the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones,* Prov. xiv. 30. Hence so many persons shorten their days by obstinate grief, for the sorrow of the world worketh death. What numbers of men put an untimely end to their lives by intemperance, murder, and robbery, and make good that awful saying of David? *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days,* Psalm lv. 23!—What multitudes verify this doctrine of the wise man! *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened,* Prov. x. 27.—Does not the Psalmist pray, *O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days,* Psalm cii. 24.?—Does he not say, *As a snail which melteth, so let the wicked pass away like the untimely fruit of a woman?* And was not this the case of the disobedient Israelites in the wilderness, who committed the sin unto bodily death? Is not this evident from 1 Cor. x.; *Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them also committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand, &c.?*—Nay, was not this the case of many of the Corinthians themselves? *For this cause [because he that receiveth the Lord's supper unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself] many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [i. e. die.]* 1 Cor. xi. 30.?

My second argument is taken from *reason*. If God has absolutely appointed the untimely death of all who shorten their own days, or the days of others, by intemperance, filthy diseases, adultery, murder, robbery, treason, &c. &c. he has also *absolutely* appointed all the crimes by which their days are shortened; and has contrived all the wars and massacres by which this earth is become a field of blood. I have heard of some Indians who worship a horned, grinning idol, with an huge mouth split from ear to ear. But the preaching of a God, who has planned and necessitated all the crimes that ever turned the world into an aceldama, and a common sewer of debauchery, is an honour that the Manichees, and the orthodox, so called, may claim to themselves.

Should Mr. T. answer, that although “*the free will of the Deity alone may fabricate,*” adultery, murder, and every intermediate link of

the chain of necessity ; and that, although the generation and death of a child conceived in adultery, and cut off by murder, is “ *divinely and unchangeably fixed* ;” yet God is not at all the author of the adultery and murder ; I desire to know, how we can cut the Gordian knot, and divide between *adultery*, and the *generation or conception* of a child born in adultery ;—and between the *murder* of such a child, and its *untimely death* caused by the cruelty of its unnatural mother.

From the whole, if I am not mistaken, we may safely conclude :—1. That the birth and death of all mankind take place according to some providential laws :—2. That God, in a *peculiar* manner, interposes in the *execution or suspension* of these laws, with respect to the *birth* of some men : witness the birth of Isaac, Samuel, John the Baptist, &c.—3. That he does the same with respect to the untimely death of some, and the wonderful *preservation* of others ; as appears by the awful destruction of Ananias, Sapphira, Herod : and by the miraculous preservation of Moses in the Nile—of Daniel in the den of lions—of Jonah in the whale’s belly—and of Peter in the prison :—4. That if neither the first nor the last link of the chain of human life is, in general, fabricated by the *absolute will* of God, it is unreasonable to suppose that “ *the free will of Deity alone fabricates the intermediate links* :”—5. That to carry the doctrine of Providence so far as to make God *absolutely* appoint the birth and death of all mankind with all their circumstances, is to exculpate adulterers and murderers, and to charge God with being the principal contriver, and grand abettor of all the atrocious crimes, and of all the filthy, bloody circumstances, which have accompanied the birth and death of countless myriads of men :—And therefore, 6. That the doctrine of the *absolute necessity* of all events, which is commonly called *absolute predestination*, is to be exploded as unscriptural, irrational, immoral, and big with the most impious consequences. However, Mr. T. seems ready to conclude, that the death of every man is absolutely predestinated because the *fall of a sparrow* is not beneath the notice of our heavenly Father. And that he thinks so, appears from his producing the following texts in defence of *absolute necessity*.

Pp. 81—87. “ *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father,—Matt. x. 29.—Not one of them, &c. is forgotten before God. Luke xii. 6.*”—These, and the like scriptures do not prove, that God made particular decrees from all eternity, concerning the number of times that a sparrow should chirp, the number of seeds that it should eat, and the peculiar time and manner of its death. They prove only, that God’s providence extends to their preservation ; and that they rise

into existence, or fall according to some law of God's making, the effect of which he can suspend whenever he pleases. If you shoot a sparrow, it falls indeed according to this natural law of our Father, that an animal mortally wounded shall fall; but it by no means follows, that you are necessitated thus to wound it.—When the emperor Domitian spent his time in catching and killing flies, those insects fell a sacrifice to his childish and cruel sport, according to this general decree of Providence, “In such circumstances, a man shall have power to kill a feeblener animal.” But, to suppose that, from all eternity, God made absolute decrees that Domitian should lock himself up in his apartment, and kill twenty-three flies on such a day, and forty-six the next day—that he should wring off the head of one which was six weeks old, and with a pin impale another, which was three months, six hours, and fifteen minutes old;—Or to imagine that, before the foundation of the world, the Almighty decreed, that three idle boys should play the truant such an afternoon, in order to seek birds' nests;—that they should find a sparrow's nest with five young ones;—that they should torment one to death, that they should let another fly away, that they should starve the third, feed the fourth, and give the fifth to a cat, after having put its eyes out, and plucked so many feathers out of its tender wings:—To suppose this, I say, is to undo all by overdoing. It is absurdly to ascribe to God the cruelty of Nero, and the childishness of Domitian, for fear he should not have all the glory of St. John's love, and Solomon's wisdom. In a word, it is to make *the Father of lights* exactly like *the prince of darkness*—the evil principle of the Manichees, who is the first cause of all iniquity and wo. Who can sufficiently wonder, that any good man should be so dreadfully mistaken as to call such a scheme a *Christian* scheme!—a doctrine according to godliness!—a Gospel!—and the genuine Gospel too! And when Mr. T. charges us with *Atheism*, because we cannot bow to the first cause of all evil, does he not betray as much prejudice as the heathens did, when they called the primitive Christians *Atheists*, merely because the disciples of Christ bore their testimony against idol gods?

Mr. T. produces many passages of Scripture, besides those which I have animadverted upon in this section. But as they are equally misapplied, one or another of the twelve keys which I have presented the public with, will easily rescue all of them from Calvinian bondage.

SECTION IV.

An answer to the capital objections of the Necessitarians against the doctrine of Liberty.

IF I have broken the unphilosophical and unscriptural pillars on which Mr. T. builds his temple of philosophical and Christian necessity, I have nothing to do now but to answer some plausible objections, by which the Necessitarians puzzle those who embrace the doctrine of liberty.

OBJ. I. And first, they say, that “if God had not secured every link of the chain of events, it would fall to pieces; and the events which God wants *absolutely* to bring about, could not be brought about at all; whilst those which he designs *absolutely* to hinder, would take place in full opposition to his decrees.”

But we deny these consequences: for, 1. Nothing that God determines *absolutely* to hinder shall ever come to pass. Thus he has absolutely decreed, that the gates of hell shall never totally prevail against or destroy his church, i. e. all true Christians; and therefore, there will always be some true Christians upon earth.—It is his absolute will, that all who *by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory* shall have *eternal life*, and that all who finally neglect so great salvation shall feel his wrathful indignation; and therefore none shall pluck the former out of the hands of his remunerative mercy, and none shall pluck the latter out of the hands of his vindictive justice.

2. God has ten thousand strings at his providential bow—and ten thousand bridles in his providential hand, to curb and manage free agents, which way soever they please to go: and therefore to suppose, that he has tightly bound all his creatures with cords of *absolute* necessity, for fear he should not be able to manage them if they had their liberty—to suppose this, I say, is to pour upon divine Providence the same contempt, which a timorous gentleman brings upon himself, when he dares not ride a spirited horse any longer than a groom leads him by the bridle, that he may not run away with his unskilful rider.

3. If things had not happened one way, they might have happened another way. Supposing, for example, God had absolutely ordered, that Solomon should be David's son by Bathsheba; this event might have taken place without his *necessitating* David to commit adultery and murder. For Providence might have found out means for marrying Bathsheba to David before she was married to Uriah: or

God might have taken Uriah to heaven by a fever, and David could legally have married his widow. Again : if neither Caiaphas nor Pilate had condemned our Lord, he could have made his life an offering for sin, by commanding the clouds to shoot a thousand lightnings upon his devoted head, and to consume him as Elijah's sacrifice was consumed on mount Carmel.

4. The pious author of Ecclesiasticus says with great truth, that *God has no need of the sinful man*. To suppose that the chain of God's providence would have been absolutely broken, if Manasseh or Nero had committed one murder less than they did, is to ascribe to the old murderer and his servants an importance of which *Manes* himself might have been ashamed. Although God used Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, and Attila, to scourge guilty nations, and to exercise the patience of his righteous servants, he was by no means obliged to use them. For he might have obtained the same ends by the plague, the famine, or the dreadful ministry of the angel who cut off the firstborn of the Egyptians, and the numerous army of Sennacherib. I flatter myself that these four answers fully set aside the first objection of the Necessitarians. Pass we on to another.

OBJ. II. "If God had not *necessitated* the fall of Adam, and *secured* his sin, Adam might have continued innocent ; and then, there would have been no need of Christ and of Christianity. Had Adam stood, we should have been without Christ to all eternity : but believers had rather be born in sin than be Christless : they had rather be sick than have nothing to do with their heavenly Physician, and with the cordials of his sanctifying Spirit."*

Answer. It is absurd to insinuate that the Father *necessitated* Adam to sin, in order to make way for the indwelling of his *Word* and *Spirit* in the hearts of believers. For if Adam was made in the image of God ;—if God is that mysterious, adorable, supreme Being, whom the Scriptures call *Father*, *Word*, and *Holy Ghost* ;—if the Father gave his *Word* and *Light* to Adam in Paradise, and shed abroad divine love in his heart by the *Holy Ghost* given unto him, Adam was full of the *Word* and *Spirit* of God by creation. And, although the eternal *Word* was not Adam's Redeemer, yet he was Adam's life and light ; for Christ, considered as the *Word of God*, was the wisdom and power of sinless man, just as he is the wisdom and power of holy believers. The reason why man needed not the atoning blood of the

* Mr. Toplady dares not produce this objection in all its force : he only hints at it. His own words are, p. 130, " Let me give our free willers a very momentous hint : viz. That the entrance of original *sin* was one of those *essential links*, on which the Messiah's incarnation and crucifixion were suspended."

Lamb in the state of innocence, was because the holy Lamb of God lived in his heart, and jointly with the Spirit of love, maintained there the mystical kingdom of righteous peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. To suppose, therefore, that if Adam had not sinned he would have had nothing to do with the *Word and Spirit of the Father*, is as absurd as to fancy, that, if people did not poison themselves, they would have nothing to do with health and cheerfulness. And to intimate that God necessarily brought about the sin of Adam, in order to make way for the murder of his incarnate Son, is as impious as to insinuate, that our Lord impelled the Jews to despise the day of their visitation, in order to secure the opportunity of weeping over the hardness of their hearts. If God necessitated the mischief in order to remedy it, the gratitude of the redeemed is partly at an end; and the thanks they owe him are only of the same kind with such as Mr. Toplady would owe me, if I wantonly caused him to break his legs, and then procured him a good surgeon to set them. But what shall we say of the non-redeemed? Those unfortunate creatures whom Mr. Toplady calls the *Reprobate*? Are there not countless myriads of these according to his unscriptural Gospel? And what thanks do these owe the evil Manichean God, who absolutely necessitates them to sin, and absolutely debars them from any saving interest in a Redeemer, that he may send them *without fail* to everlasting burnings? How strangely perverted is the rational taste of Mr. T. who calls the doctrine of absolute necessity, which is big with absolute reprobation, absolute wickedness, and absolute damnation, a *comfortable doctrine*! a doctrine of *grace*! May we not expect next to hear him cry up midnight gloom as meridian brightness?

But to return: If it was *necessary* that Adam should sin in order to glorify the Father by making way for the crucifixion of the Lamb of God, is it not also *necessary* that believers should sin in order to glorify God more abundantly, by *crucifying Christ afresh*, and *putting him again to open shame*? Will they not, by this mean, have greater need of their Physician, make a fuller trial of the virtue of his blood, and sing louder in heaven? O how perilous is a doctrine which at every turn transforms itself into a doctrine of light, to support the most subtle and pernicious tenet of the Antinomians, *Let us sin that grace may abound*!

Mr. T., who has only hinted at the two preceding objections, triumphs much in that which follows: it shall therefore appear clothed in his own words. In the contents of his book he says, "*Methodists*—[he gives this name to all who oppose his scheme of

Necessity.] *Methodists, more gross Manicheans than Manes himself:*" The proof occurs page 144. in the following words.

OBJ. III. "The old Manicheism was a *gentle impiety*, and a slender absurdity, when contrasted with the modern Arminian improvements on that system. For which is worse? To assert the existence of *two independent Beings*, and no more; or, To assert the existence of *about one hundred and fifty millions of independent Beings*, all living at one time, and most of them waging successful war on the designs of him that made them?—Even confining ourselves to our own world it will follow that *Arminian Manicheism* exceeds the paltry Oriental Duality, at the immense rate of 150,000,000 to 2—without reckoning the adult self-determiners of *past generations*."

Answer. This argument, cast into a logical mould, will yield the following syllogism:

Every being, able to *determine himself*, is an *independent being*, and of consequence, a *God*:

According to the doctrine of free will, every accountable man is a being able to *determine himself*;

Therefore, according to the doctrine of free will, every accountable man is an independent being, and consequently a God.—Hence it follows, that, if Manes erred by believing there were two Gods, those who espouse the doctrine of free will are more gross Manicheans than Manes himself; since they believe that every man is a God.

Observe Mr. T.'s consistency! indeed when he attacks Mr. W. and Arminianism, no charges [be they ever so contradictory] come amiss to him. In his *Historic Proof*, Arminianism is *Atheism*; and in his *Scheme of Necessity*, Arminianism is a system which supposes countless myriads of gods! But, letting this pass, I observe, that the preceding syllogism is a mere sophism; the first proposition, on which all the others depend, being absolutely false; witness the following appeals to common sense.

Is a horse *independent* on his master because he can *determine himself* to range or lie down in his pasture?—Is Mr. T. *independent* on his bishop, because he can *determine himself* to preach twice next Sunday, or only once, or not at all?—Is a captain *independent* on his general, because he can *determine himself* to stand his ground, or to run away in an engagement?—Are soldiers *independent* on their colonel, because they *determined themselves* to list in such a company?—Is a Negro slave *independent* on his master, or is he a little

God, because when he lies down, he can *determine himself* to do it on the left side, or on the right?—Is a highwayman a *God*, because he can *determine himself* to rob a traveller, or to let him pass without molestation? In a word, are subjects *independent* of their sovereign, because they can *determine themselves* to break or to keep the laws of the land?

Every one of the preceding questions pours light upon the absurdity of Mr. T.'s argument. But that absurdity will appear doubly glaring, if you consider three things;—1. All free agents have received their life and free agency from God as precious talents, for the good or bad use of which they are *accountable* to his distributive justice.—2. All free agents are every moment *dependent* upon God for the preservation of their life and free agency; there being no instant in which God may not resume all his temporary talents, by requiring their souls of them.—3. He has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ; then shall he publicly convince all moral agents of their dependence on his goodness and justice, by graciously rewarding the righteous, and justly punishing the wicked according to their works.—4. In the meantime, he makes them sensible of their *dependence* by keeping in his providential hand the *staff of their bread*, and the thread of their *life*: saying to the greatest of them, *Ye are Gods* [in authority over others,] *but ye shall die like men*; and—*after death comes judgment*.—It is as ridiculous therefore to suppose that upon the scheme of free will, men are *independent* beings; as to assert that prisoners, who are going to the bar to meet their Lawgiver and Judge, are independent upon his supreme authority; because those who are going to be condemned for robbery or murder, *determined themselves* to rob or murder, without any Antinomian, impulsive decree made by their Judge; and because those who are going to be rewarded for their obedience were not necessitated to obey, as a wave is necessitated to roll along when it is irresistibly impelled by another wave.

However, Mr. T. sings the song of victory, as if he had proved that upon the Arminian scheme of free will every man is an *independent being*, and a *God*. “Poor Manes!” says he, “with how excellent a grace do Arminians call thee a heretic! And above all such Arminians (whereof Mr. J. Wesley is one) as agree with thee, in believing the attainability of *sinless perfection* here below: or, to use the good old Manichean phrase, who assert, that *The Evil Principle may be totally separated from man in this present life*!”

The reader will permit me to make a concluding remark upon this triumphant exclamation of Mr. Toplady. I have observed that

Manes believed, there are in the Godhead two co-eternal principles : 1. The absolute sovereignty of *free grace*, which necessitates men to good ; and 2. The absolute sovereignty of *free wrath*, which necessitates them to evil. Nevertheless, Manes was not so mistaken as to suppose that the good principle in his deity was weaker than the bad principle ; and that the latter could never be dislodged by the former from the breast of one single elect person. Manes had faith enough to believe, that now is the day of salvation, and that Christ (and not death, or a temporary hell] *saves* good Christians *from their sins*. Accordingly he asserted, that nothing unholy or wicked can dwell with the good principled God ; and that none shall inherit eternal life, but such as so concur with the heavenly light, as to have the works of darkness destroyed in their souls. And therefore he maintained with St. Paul, that we must be *sanctified throughout*, and that our souls must be found at death *blameless, and without spot or wrinkle* of sin ; and he held with St. John, that he who is *fully born of God* (the good principle) *sinneth not, but keepeth himself, and the wicked principle toucheth him not*, so as to lead him into iniquity. Now if Mr. T. so firmly believes in the evil principle, as to assert, that, though believers are ever so willing to have no other Lord but the good principled God, yet this God can never destroy before death the works of the sin-predestinating God in their hearts ; and if, on the other hand, the wicked principle completely destroys all good in all the reprobates, even in this life ; is it not evident that Mr. Toplady's charge may be justly retorted ;* and that, as he ascribes so much more power to the evil principle than to the good, he carries the sovereignty of the evil principle farther than Manes himself did, and is, [to use his own expression,] a " more gross Manichean than Manes himself."

* Page 154. Mr. T. produces the following objection. "'Tis curious to behold Arminians themselves forced to take refuge in the harbour of Necessity. It is *necessary*, say they, that man's will should be *free* ; for without freedom, the will were *no will* at all" [i. e. *no free will—no such will as constitutes man a moral and accountable agent*]"—"Free-agency, themselves being judges, is only a ramification of *necessity*."

This is playing upon words, and shuffling logical cards in order to delude the simple. I have granted again and again, that there is a necessity of nature, a necessity of consequence, a necessity of duty, a necessity of decency, a necessity of convenience, &c. &c. but all these sorts of necessity do no more amount to the *Calvinian, absolute* necessity of all events, than my granting that the king has a variety of officers about his person by *necessity* of decency, of office, of custom, &c. implies my granting, that he has a certain officer, who *absolutely necessitates* him to move just as he does, insomuch that he cannot turn his eyes, or stir one finger otherwise than this imaginary officer directs or impels him. This objection of Mr. T. is so excessively trifling that I almost blame myself for taking notice of it even in a *note*.

OBJ. IV. "Your scheme of free will labours under a greater difficulty than that with which you clog the scheme of necessity : because, if it do not represent the sin-necessitating principle as more powerful than the good principle, yet it represents created spirits as stronger than the God who made them ; an impotent, disappointed God this, who says,—*I would—and ye would not.*"

Answer 1. These words were actually spoken by incarnate omnipotence : nor do they prove that man is stronger than God ; but only that when God deals with free agents about those things concerning which he will call them to an account, he does not necessitate their will by an irresistible exertion of his power, (*propter justum Dei judicium*) that he may leave room for the display of his justice, as the fathers said ; for his perfections, and our probationary circumstances require, that he should maintain the character of Lawgiver and Judge, as well as that of Creator and Sovereign. And therefore when we say, that free agents are not necessarily determined by God to those actions for which God is going to punish or reward them, we do not represent free agents as stronger or greater than God. We only place them (*sub justo Dei judicio*) under God's righteous government, as said the fathers, equally subjected to the legislative wisdom, and executive power of their omnipotent Lawgiver.

2. Whether free agents are rewarded or punished, saved or damned, God our Saviour will never be disappointed ; for, 1. He will pronounce the sentence ; and what he will do himself will not disappoint his expectation. 2. It is as much God's righteous, eternal design to punish wicked, obstinate free agents, as to reward yielding, and obedient free agents. 3. Every Gospel dispensation yields a savour of life or death. The sword of the Lord is a two-edged sword : if it do not cut down a man's sin it will cut down his person. And though God as Creator and Redeemer, does not in the day of salvation Calvinistically desire the death of a sinner ; yet, as a holy Lawgiver, a covenant keeping God, and a righteous Judge, he is determined to render to every man according to his deeds : eternal life to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory ; but indignation and wrath to them who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness : And God will do this, In the day when he shall judge the secrets of men according to the Gospel. Rom. ii. 6—16. Hence it is evident that the bow of divine justice has two strings, that each string will shoot its peculiar arrow, and although God leaves it to free agents to choose which they will have, the arrow which is winged with remunerative life, or that which carries vindictive death ;

yet he can never be disappointed ; he will most infallibly hit the judicial mark which he has set up ; witness the awful declaration which is engraven upon that mark : *These [obstinate free agents] shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal.* Matt. xxv. 46.

Upon the whole, I humbly hope, that whether candid readers consider the inconclusiveness of Mr. T.'s philosophical arguments—the injudicious manner in which he has pressed the Scriptures into the service of *absolute necessity*—or the weakness of his objections, which he directly or indirectly makes against the doctrine of *liberty* ; they will see that his scheme is as contrary to true philosophy, and to well-applied Scripture, as the *absolute necessity* of adultery and murder is contrary to good morals, and the *absolute reprobation* of some of our unborn children, and perhaps of our own souls, is contrary to evangelical comfort.

SECTION V.

The doctrine of NECESSITY is the capital error of the Calvinists, and the foundation of the most wretched schemes of Philosophy and Divinity. —How nearly MR. TOPLADY agrees with MR. HOBBS, the apostle of the MATERIALISTS in England, with respect to the doctrine of NECESSITY.—Conclusion.

WE have seen on what philosophical and scriptural proofs Mr. Toplady founds the doctrine of *necessity* ; and if I am not mistaken, the inconclusiveness of his arguments has been fairly pointed out. I shall now subjoin some remarks, which I hope are not unworthy of the reader's attention.

1. It is not without reason that Mr. T. borrows from false philosophy, and misapplied passages of Scripture, whatever seems to countenance his doctrine of *necessity* : for that doctrine is the very soul of Calvinism, and Calvinism is, in his account, the marrow of the Gospel. If the doctrine of *absolute necessity* be true, Calvinian election and reprobation are true also : if it be false, Calvinism, so far as we oppose it, is left without either prop or foundation. Take away *necessity* from the modern doctrines of grace, and you reduce them to the Scripture standard, which we follow, and of which *Arminius* was too much afraid.

2. Those who would see at once the bar which separates us from the Calvinists, need only consider the following questions :—Are all

those who shall be damned *absolutely necessitated* to continue in sin and perish? And are all those who shall be saved, *absolutely necessitated* to work righteousness and be eternally saved? Or, to unite both questions in one, Shall men be *judged*, that is, shall they be *justified* or *condemned*, in the last day, as *bound agents*, according to the unavoidable consequences of *Christ's* work, or of *Adam's* work? Or, shall they be *justified* or *condemned*, according to *their own* works, as the Scripture declares? I lay a peculiar stress upon the words *their own*, because works, which absolute decrees *necessitate* us to do, are no longer, properly speaking, *our own* works; but the works of him who *necessitates* us to do them.

3. There is but one case in which we can scripturally admit the Calvinian doctrine of *necessity*, and that is, the salvation of infants who die before they have committed actual sin. These we grant are *necessarily* or Calvinistically saved. But they will not be *judged* according to *THEIR* WORKS, seeing they died before *they wrought* either iniquity or righteousness. Their salvation will depend only on the irresistible work of Christ, and his Spirit. As they were never called personally to *work out their own salvation*; and as they never personally wrought out their own damnation, they will all be *saved* by the superabounding grace of God, through the meritorious infancy and death of the holy child Jesus. But it is an abomination to suppose, that because God can justly *force* holiness and salvation upon some infants, he can justly *force* continued sin and eternal damnation upon myriads of people, by putting them in such circumstances as *absolutely necessitate* them to continue in sin and be damned. I repeat it: God may bestow *eternal favours* upon persons whom his decrees *necessitate* to be righteous. But he can never inflict *eternal punishments* upon persons, whom his decrees, according to Mr. Top-lady's doctrine, *necessitate* to be wicked from first to last.

4. The moderate Calvinists say indeed, that Adam was endued with *free will*, and that God did not *necessitate* him to sin: but if *necessity* had nothing to do with the first man's obedience and first transgression; why should it be supposed, that it has so much to do with us, as absolutely to beget all our good and bad works? And if it be not unreasonable to say that God endued *one* man with a power to determine himself; why should we be considered as enemies to the Gospel, because we assert that he has made all men in some degree capable of determining themselves; the Scriptures declaring that he treats all adult persons as free agents, or persons endued with the power of self-determination?

5. Mr. Toplady and all the rigid Calvinists suppose indeed, that God's *neessitation* extended to the commission of Adam's sin, and yet they tell us that God is not the *author*, but only the *permitter* of sin. But they do not consider that their doctrine of *absolute necessity* leaves no more room for *permission*, than the *absolute decree* that a pound shall always exactly weigh sixteen ounces, leaves room for a *permission* of its weighing sometimes fifteen ounces and sometimes seventeen. Should Mr. Toplady reply, that "such a *decree*, however, leaves room for the *permission*, that a pound shall always exactly weigh sixteen ounces:" I reply, that this is playing upon words; it being evident that the word *permission*, in such a case, is artfully put for the plainer word *necessity* or *absolute decree*. It is evident, therefore, that although Mr. Toplady aims at being more consistent than the moderate Calvinists, he is in fact as inconsistent as they, if he denies that, upon the scheme of the *absolute decrees* preached by Calvin, and of the *absolute necessity* which he himself maintains, God is properly the *contriver* and *author* of all sin and wickedness.

6. It is dreadful to lay, directly or indirectly, all sin at the door of an omnipotent Being, who is *fearful in holiness*, and *glorious in praises*. Nor is it less dangerous to make poor deluded Christians swallow down, as *Gospel*, some of the most dangerous errors that were ever propagated by ancient or modern Infidels. We have already seen that the capital error of *Manes* was the doctrine of *necessity*. This doctrine was also the grand engine with which *Spinos*a in Holland, and *Hobbes* in England, attempted to overthrow Christianity in the last century. Those two men, who may be called the apostles of modern *Materialists* and *Atheists*, tried to destroy the Lord's vineyard, by letting loose upon it the very error which Mr. T. recommends to us as the capital doctrine of grace. "Spinosa, [says a modern author] will allow no Governor of the universe but *necessity*." As for Mr. *Hobbes*, he built his *Materialism* upon the ruins of *free will*, and the foundation of *necessity*: hear the above-quoted author giving us an account of the monstrous system of religion, known by the name of *Hobbism*: "Freedom of will it was impossible that Mr. *Hobbes* should assert to be a property of matter; but he finds a very unexpected way to extricate himself out of the difficulty. The proposition against him stands thus; 'Freedom of will cannot be a property of matter; but there are beings which have freedom of will; therefore there are substances which are not material.' He answers this at once, by saying the most strange thing, and the most contradictory to our knowledge of what passes within ourselves, that per-

haps was ever advanced; namely, that there is no freedom of will. Every effect, he says, [and this is exactly the doctrine of Mr. Toplady, as the quotations I have produced from his book abundantly prove;] Every effect must be owing to some cause, and that cause must produce the effect *necessarily*. Thus, whatever body is moved, is moved by some other body, and that by a third, and so on without end. In the same manner he, [Mr. Hobbes] concludes, the will of a *voluntary agent* must be determined by some other external to it, and so on without end: therefore that the will is not determined by any power of determining itself, inherent in itself; that is, it is not free, nor is there any such thing as freedom of will; but that all is the act of *necessity*."—This is part of the account which the author of the *Answer to Lord Bollingbroke's Philosophy* gives us of Mr. Hobbes's detestable scheme of *necessity*; and it behooves Mr. Toplady and the Calvinists to see, if, while they contend for their absolute decrees, and for the doctrine of the absolute *necessity* and *passiveness* of all our willings and motions, they do not inadvertently confound matter and spirit, and make way for Hobbes's *Materialism*, as well as for his scheme of *necessity*.

7. The moment the doctrine of *Necessity* is overthrown, Manicheism, Spinosism, Hobbism, and the spreading religion of Mr. Voltaire, are left without foundation; as well as that part of Calvin's system which we object against. And we beseech Mr. Toplady, and the contenders for Calvinian decrees, to consider, that if we oppose their doctrine, it is not from any prejudice against their persons, much less against God's free grace; but from the same motive which would make us bear our testimony against *Manes*, *Spinosa*, *Hobbes*, and *Voltaire*, if they would impose their errors upon us as "doctrines of grace." Mr. Wesley and I are ready to testify upon oath, that we humbly submit to God's sovereignty, and joyfully glory in the freeness of Gospel grace, which has mercifully distinguished us from countless myriads of our fellow-creatures, by gratuitously bestowing upon us numberless favours, of a spiritual and temporal nature, which he has thought proper absolutely to withhold from our fellow-creatures. To meet the Calvinists on their own ground, we go so far as to allow, there is a *partial, gratuitous election and reprobation*. By this election Christians are admitted to the enjoyment of privileges far superior to those of the Jews: and according to this reprobation myriads of Heathens are absolutely cut off from all the prerogatives, which accompany God's covenants of peculiar grace. In a word, we grant to the Calvinists every thing they contend for, except the doctrine of *Absolute Necessity*: Nay, we even grant the *necessary*,

unavoidable salvation of all that die in their infancy. And our love to peace would make us go farther to meet Mr. Toplady, if we could do it without giving up the justice, mercy, truth, and wisdom of God, together with the truth of the Scriptures, the equity of God's paradisiacal and mediatorial laws, the propriety of the day of judgment, and the reasonableness of the sentences of absolution and condemnation, which the righteous Judge will then pronounce. We hope, therefore, that the prejudices of our Calvinian brethren will subside, and that, instead of accounting us inveterate enemies to truth, they will do us the justice to say, that we have done our best to hinder them from inadvertently betraying some of the greatest truths of Christianity into the hands of the Manichees, Materialists, Infidels, and Antinomians of the age. May the Lord hasten the happy day in which we shall no more waste our precious time in attacking or defending the truths of our holy religion; but bestow every moment in the sweetest exercises of divine and brotherly love! In the mean time, if we must contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, let us do it with ■ plainness that may effectually detect error; and with a mildness that may soften our most violent opponents. Lest I should transgress against this rule, I beg leave once more to observe, that though I have made it appear that Mr. Toplady's *Scheme of Necessity* is inseparably connected with the most horrid errors of Manicheism, Materialism, and Hobbism, yet I am far from accusing him of wilfully countenancing any of those bad errors. I am persuaded he does it *undesignedly*. The badness of his cause obliges him to collect, from all quarters, every shadow of argument to support his favourite opinion. And I make no doubt, but, when he shall candidly review our controversy, it will be his grief to find, that in his hurry, he has contended for a scheme which gives up Christianity into the hands of her greatest enemies, and has poured floods of undeserved contempt upon Mr. Wesley, who is one of her best defenders.

AN

ANSWER

TO THE

REV. MR. TOPLADY'S

"VINDICATION OF THE DECREES,"

&c. &c.



BY THE AUTHOR OF THE CHECKS.



The [absolute] "predestination of some to life, &c. cannot be maintained without admitting the" [absolute] "reprobation of some others to death, &c. and all who have subscribed the said article" [the XVII. in a Calvinian sense] "are bound in honour, conscience, and law, to defend" [Calvinian, absolute] "reprobation, were it only to keep the XVIIth article" [taken in a Calvinian sense] "upon its legs." The Rev. Mr. Toplady's *Historic Proof of Calvinism*, p. 574.

INTRODUCTION.



WHEN the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* took his temporary leave of me in his *Finishing Stroke*, he recommended to the public the book which I am going to answer. His recommendation runs thus: "who-soever will consult the Rev. Mr. Toplady's last publication, entitled, *More Work for Mr. John Wesley*, [or, *A Vindication of the Decrees, &c.*] will there find a full answer to all those cavils which Papists, Socinians, Pelagians, Arminians, and Perfectionists, bring against those doctrines commonly called Calvinist, as if they tended to promote licentiousness, or to make God cruel, unjust, and unmerciful, and will see every one of their objections retorted upon themselves in a most masterly manner." *Fin. Stroke*, page 33. Soon after Mr. Hill had thus extolled Mr. Toplady's performance, I was informed that many of the Calvinists said, that it was an unanswerable defence of their doctrines. This raised in me a desire to judge for myself; and when I had sent for, and read this admired book, I was so far from being of Mr. Hill's sentiment, that I promised my readers to demonstrate from that very book, the inconclusiveness of the strongest arguments by which Calvinism is supported. Mr. Hill, by unexpectedly entering the lists again, caused me to delay the fulfilling of my promise. But having now completed my answer to his fictitious creeds, I hasten to complete also my *Logica Genevensis*.

Did I write a book entitled *Charitas Genevensis*, I might easily show from Mr. Toplady's performance, that "*The doctrines of grace*" [so called] are closely connected with "*The doctrines of free wrath.*" But if that gentleman, in his controversial heat, has forgotten what he owed to Mr. Wesley and to himself, this is no reason why I should forget the title of my book, which calls me to point out the *bad arguments* of our opponents, and not their *ill humour*. If I absurdly spent my time in passing a censure upon Mr. Toplady's spirit, he would with reason say, as he does in the *Introduction* to his *Historic Proof*, page 35, "After all, what has my pride or my humility to do with the argument in hand? whether I am haughty or meek, is of no more

consequence either to that, or to the public, than whether I am tall or short." Besides, having again and again myself requested our opponents not to wiredraw the controversy, by personal reflections, but to weigh with candour the arguments which are offered, I should be inexcusable if I did not set them the example. Should it be said that Mr. Wesley's character, which Mr. Toplady has so severely attacked, is at stake, and that I ought purposely to stand up in his defence, I reply, that the personal charges which Mr. Toplady interweaves with his arguments, have been already fully answered* by Mr. Olivers; and that these charges being chiefly founded upon Mr. Toplady's logical mistakes, they will, of their own accord, fall to the ground, as soon as the mistakes on which they rest shall be exposed. If *Logica Genevensis* is disarmed, *Charitas Genevensis* will not be able to keep the field. If *good sense* take the former prisoner, the latter will be obliged to surrender to *good nature*. Should this be the case, how great a blessing will our controversy prove to both parties! The conquerors shall have the glory of *vindicating truth*: and the conquered shall have the profit of retiring from the field with their judgments better informed, and their tempers better regulated! May the God of truth and love grant, that if Mr. Toplady have the *honour* of producing the *best* arguments, I [for one] may have the *advantage* of yielding to them! To be conquered by *truth* and *love*, is to prove conqueror over our two greatest enemies, *error* and *sin*.

Madeley, Oct. 1775.

* See "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Toplady," by Mr. Olivers.

AN
ANSWER
TO THE
REV. MR. TOPLADY'S
"VINDICATION OF THE DECREES," &c.



SECTION I.

Showing that upon the Calvinian scheme, it is an indubitable truth, that some men shall be saved DO WHAT THEY WILL, till the efficacious decree of Calvinian election NECESSITATE them to repent and be saved; and that others shall be damned, DO WHAT THEY CAN, till the efficacious decree of Calvinian Reprobation NECESSITATE them to draw back and be damned.

THE doctrinal part of the controversy between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Toplady may, in a great degree, be reduced to this question: if God, from all eternity, absolutely predestinated a fixed number of men, called the *elect*, to eternal life, and absolutely predestinated a fixed number of men, called the *reprobate*, to eternal death, does it not unavoidably follow, that "*The elect shall be saved, do what they will;*" and that "*The reprobate shall be damned, do what they can?*" Mr. Wesley thinks that the consequence is undeniably true: Mr. Toplady says, that it is absolutely false, and charges Mr. Wesley with "*coining blasphemous propositions,*" yea, with "*hatching blasphemy, and then fathering it on others,*" [page 7, 8.] and in a note upon the word *blasphemous*, he says, "*This epithet is not too strong. To say, that any shall be saved, DO WHAT THEY WILL, and others damned, DO WHAT THEY CAN, is, in the first instance, blasphemy against the HOLINESS of God; and, in the second, blasphemy against his GOODNESS:*" and again, p. 34. after repeating the latter clause of the consequence viz, "*The reprobate shall be damned, do what they can,*" he expresses

himself thus: "one would imagine that none *but* a reprobate could be capable of advancing a position so execrably shocking. Surely it must have cost even Mr. Wesley much, both of time and pains, to invent the idea, &c. Few men's invention ever sunk deeper into the despicable, launched wider into the horrid, and went farther in the profane. The Satanic guilt of the person, who could excogitate, and publish to the world, a position like that, baffles all power of description, and is only to be exceeded (if exceedable) by the Satanic shamelessness which dares to lay the black position at the door of other men.—Let us examine, whether any thing, occurring in *Zanchius*, could justly furnish this wretched defamer with materials for a deduction so truly infernal." Agreeably to these *spirited* complaints, Mr. Toplady calls his book, not only "*More Work for Mr. J. Wesley*," but also, "*A Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God, from the DEFAMATIONS of a late printed paper entitled, 'The consequence proved.'*" I side with Mr. Wesley for the consequence: guarding it against cavils by a clause, which his love for *brevity* made him think needless. And the *guarded consequence* which I undertake to defend runs thus: From the doctrine of the absolute and unconditional predestination of some men to eternal life, and of all others to eternal death, it necessarily follows, that some men shall be *saved, do what they will*, till the *absolute* and *efficacious* decree of election actually *necessitate* them to obey and be saved, and that all the rest of mankind shall be *dann'd, do what they can*, till the *absolute* and *efficacious* decree of reprobation *necessitate* them to sin, and be damned.

An illustration will at once show the justness of this consequence to the unprejudiced reader. Fifty fishes sport in a muddy pond, where they have received life. The skilful and almighty Owner of the pond has absolutely decreed, that *ten* of these fishes, properly marked with ■ shining mark, called *Election*, shall absolutely be caught in a certain net, called a *Gospel net*, on ■ certain day, called *the day of his power*; and that they shall, every one, be cast into ■ delightful river, where he has engaged himself, by an eternal covenant of particular redemption, to bring them without fail. The same omnipotent Proprietor of the pond has likewise absolutely decreed, that all the rest of the fishes, namely *forty*, which are properly distinguished by a black mark, called *Reprobation*, shall never be caught in the *Gospel net*; or that, if they are entangled in it at any time, they shall always be drawn out of it, and so shall necessarily continue in the muddy pond, till on a certain day, called *the day of his wrath*, he shall sweep the pond with a certain net, called a *law net*, catch them all, and cast them into a lake of fire and brimstone, where he has

engaged himself, by an everlasting covenant of non-redemption, to bring them all without fail, that they may answer the end of their predestination to death, which is to show the goodness of his law net, and to destroy them for having been bred in the *muddy* pond, and for not having been caught in the Gospel net. The owner of the pond is wise, as well as powerful. He knows, that absolutely to *secure* the end to which his fishes are absolutely predestinated, he must also absolutely *secure* the *means* which conduce to that end : and therefore that none may escape their happy, or unfortunate predestination, he keeps night and day his hold of them all, by a strong hook, called *necessity*, and by an invisible line, called *divine decrees*. By means of this line and hook, it happens, that if the fishes which bear the mark of *election*, are ever so loth to come into the Gospel net, or to stay therein, they are always drawn into it in a day of powerful love ; and if the fishes which bear the mark of *reprobation*, are for a time, ever so desirous to wrap themselves in the Gospel net, they are always drawn out of it in a day of powerful wrath. For, though the fishes *seem* to swim ever so freely, yet their motions are all *absolutely fixed* by the owner of the pond, and determined by means of the above-mentioned line and hook. If this is the case, says Mr. Wesley, *ten* fishes shall go into the delightful river, let them *do what they will*, let them plunge in the mud of their pond ever so briskly, or leap towards the lake of fire ever so often, while they have any liberty to plunge or to leap. And all the rest of the fishes, *forty* in number, shall go into the lake of fire, let them *do what they can*, let them involve themselves ever so long in the Gospel net, and leap ever so often towards the fine river, before they are absolutely necessitated to go, through the mud of their own pond, into the sulphureous pool. The consequence is undeniable, and I make no doubt that all unprejudiced persons see it as well as myself : as sure as two and two make four, or if you please, as sure as *ten* and *forty* make fifty, so sure *ten* fishes shall be finally caught in the Gospel net, and *forty* in the law net.

Should Mr. Toplady say, that this is only an illustration, I drop it, and roundly assert, that if two men, suppose *Solomon* and *Absalom*, are *absolutely* predestinated to eternal life ; while two other men, suppose Mr. Baxter and Mr. Wesley, are *absolutely* predestinated to eternal death : the two elect shall be saved, *do what they will*, and the two reprobates shall be damned, *do what they can*. That is, let Solomon and Absalom worship the abomination of the Zidonians, and of the Moabites, in ever so public a manner ; let them, for years, indulge themselves with heathenish women, collected from all countries ; if

they have a mind, let them murder their brothers, defile their sisters, and imitate the incestuous Corinthian, who took his own father's wife : yet, they can never really endanger their finished salvation. The indelible mark of *unconditional election to life* is upon them : and forcible, victorious grace shall, in their last moments, if not before, draw them irresistibly and infallibly from iniquity to repentance. Death shall unavoidably make an end of their *indwelling sin* ; and to heaven they shall unavoidably go. On the other hand, let a *Baxter* and a *Wesley* astonish the world by their ministerial labours : let them write, speak, and live in such a manner, as to stem the torrent of iniquity, and turn thousands to righteousness : with St. Paul let them take up their cross daily, and preach and pray, not only with tears, but *with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power* : let unwearied patience and matchless diligence carry them with increasing fortitude through all the persecutions, dangers, and trials, which they meet with from the men of the world, and from false brethren : let them hold on this wonderful way to their dying day ; yet, if the indelible mark of *unconditional reprobation to death* is upon them, necessitating, victorious wrath, shall, in their last moments, if not before, make them *necessarily* turn from righteousness, and *unavoidably* draw back to perdition : so shall they be fitted for the lake of fire, the end to which, if God Calvinistically passed them by, they were absolutely ordained through the predestinated medium of *remediless sin* and *final apostacy*.

This is the true state of the case : to spend time in proving it, would be offering the judicious reader as great an insult, as if I detained him to prove, that the *north* is opposed to the *south*. But what does Mr. Toplady say against this consequence, "*if Calvinism is true, the reprobates shall be damned do what they can*?" He advances the following warm argument.

ARGUMENT I. Page 55. "Can Mr. Wesley produce a single instance of any one man, who did all he could to be saved, and yet was lost? if he *can*, let him tell us who that man was, where he lived, when he died, what he did, and how it came to pass he laboured in vain.—If he *cannot*, let him either retract his consequences, or continue to be posted for a shameless traducer."

I answer : 1. To require Mr. Wesley to show a man, who did all he could, and yet was lost, is requiring him to prove that Calvinian reprobation is *true* !—a thing this, which he can no more do, than he can prove that God is *false*. Mr. Wesley never said any man was damned after doing his best to be saved : he only says, that *if Calvinism is true*, the reprobates shall all be damned, though they should all

do their best to be saved, till the *efficacious decree* of their absolute reprobation necessitates them to draw back and be damned.

2. As Mr. Toplady's bold request may impose upon his inattentive readers, I beg leave to point out its absurdity by a short illustration. Mr. Wesley says, *if there is a mountain of gold*, it is heavier than a handful of feathers, and his consequence passes for true in England: but a gentleman, who teaches logic in mystic Geneva, thinks that it is absolutely false, and that Mr. Wesley's "*forehead must be petrified, and quite impervious to a blush*" for advancing it. Can Mr. Wesley, says he, show us a mountain of gold, which is really heavier than a handful of feathers? If he *can*, let him tell us what mountain it is, where it lies, in what latitude, how high it is, and who did ever ascend to the top of it.—If he cannot, let him either retract his consequences, or continue to be posted for a *shameless traducer*.

Equally conclusive is Mr. Toplady's challenge! By such cogent arguments as these, thousands of professors are bound to the chariot-wheels of *modern orthodoxy*, and blindly follow the warm men, who drive as furiously over a part of the body of Scripture divinity, as the Son of Nimshi did over the body of cursed Jezebel.

SECTION II.

Calvinism UPON ITS LEGS, or a FULL view of the arguments by which Mr. Toplady attempts to reconcile Calvinism with God's HOLINESS:—a note upon a letter to an Arminian teacher.

SENSIBLE that Calvinism can never rank among the doctrines of holiness, if "the elect shall be saved do what they will," and if the "reprobate shall be damned do what they can:" Mr. Toplady tries to throw off from *his* doctrines of grace the deadly weight of Mr. Wesley's consequence. In order to this, he proves that Calvinism ensures the holiness of the elect, as the *necessary means* of their predestinated salvation: but he is too judicious to tell us that it ensures also the wickedness of the reprobate, as the *necessary means* of their predestinated damnation. To make us in love with his Orthodoxy, he presents her to our view with one leg, on which she contrives to stand, by artfully leaning upon her faithful maid *Logica Genevensis*. Her other leg is prudently kept out of sight, so long as the trial about her holiness lasts. This deserves explanation.

The most distinguishing and fundamental doctrines of Calvinism are *two*: and therefore they may with propriety be called *the legs* of

that doctrinal system. The *first* of these fundamental doctrines is, the personal, unconditional, absolute *predestination*, or *election* of some men to eternal life; and the *second* is the personal, unconditional, absolute *predestination* or *reprobation* of some men to eternal death. Nor can Mr. Toplady find fault with my making his doctrine of grace stand upon *her legs*, *Calvinian election* and *Calvinian reprobation*: for, supposing that our church speaks in her *xviii* Article of Calvinian, absolute predestination to eternal life, he says himself, in his *Historic Proof*, page 574, "The *predestination* of some to life, asserted in the "*xviii* Article, cannot be maintained without admitting the *reprobation** of some others to death, &c. and all who have subscribed to

* Our opponents are greatly embarrassed about the doctrine of absolute, unconditional *reprobation*; though in a happy moment, where *candour* prevailed over *shame*, Mr. Toplady stood up so boldly for Calvinian reprobation: the reader, as he goes on will smile, when he sees the variegated wisdom, with which that gentleman disguises, exculpates, or conceals, what he so rationally and so candidly grants here.

The truth is, that as *scriptural election* is necessarily attended with an answerable *reprobation*; so *absolute, Calvinian election* unavoidably drags after it absolute Calvinian *reprobation*;—a black *reprobation* this, which *necessitates* all who are personally written in the book of death, to sin on and be damned. But some Calvinists are *afraid* to see this doctrine, and well they may, for it is horrible; others are *ashamed* to acknowledge it; and not a few, for want of rational sight, obstinately deny that it is the main pillar of their Gospel; and with the *right* leg of their system they unmercifully kick the *left*. Among the persons who are guilty of this absurd conduct, we may rank the author of *A letter to an Arminian Teacher*: an imperfect copy of which appeared in *The Gospel Magazine* of August, 1775, under the following title, *A Predestinarian's real Thoughts of Election and Reprobation*, &c. This writer is so inconsistent, as to attempt cutting off the *left* leg of Calvinism. He at first gives us *reprobation*. "The word *reprobation*" [says he] "is never mentioned in all the Scripture" [no more is the word *predestination*] "nor is the scriptural word *reprobate* ever mentioned as the consequence of election, or as [its] *opposite*."—This is a great mistake, as appears from the two first passages quoted by this author, Jer. vi. 30. and Rom. i. 28. where *reprobate silver* is evidently opposed to *choice silver*, and where a *reprobate mind* is indubitably opposed to *the mind which is after God's own heart*—i. e. to the mind which God *approves* and *chooses* to crown with evangelical praises and rewards. Our author goes on:

"There is no immediate connexion between election to salvation and reprobation to damnation." What an argument is this! did we ever say that there is any *immediate connexion* between two things which are as contrary as Christ and Belial!—Oh! but we mean that "*they have no necessary dependence on each other*."—The question is not whether they have a "*necessary dependence on each other*;" but, whether they have not a NECESSARY OPPOSITION to each other; and that they have, is as clear as that *light* is opposed to *darkness*.—"They proceed from very different causes."—True: for election proceeds from *free grace*, and Calvinian reprobation from *free wrath*.—"The sole cause of election is God's free love, &c. The sole cause of DAMNATION is only sin."—Our author wants candour or attention. Had he argued like a candid logician, he would have said, "The sole cause of the *reprobation* which ends in unavoidable damnation is only sin:" but if he had fairly argued thus, he would have given up Calvinism, which stands or falls with *absolute* reprobation; and therefore, he thought proper to substitute the word *damnation* for the word *REPROBATION* which the argument absolutely requires. These tricks may pass in Geneva; but in England they appear inconsistent with fair reasoning. It is a common

“the said Article, are bound in *honour, conscience, and law* to defend *reprobation*, were it only to keep the *xviii* Article,” [or rather, the Calvinian sense which Mr. Toplady fixes to that Article] “upon *its legs*.”

Agreeably to Mr. Toplady's charge, Calvinism shall stand *upon its legs*. He takes care to show the *right leg*, in order to vindicate God's holiness upon the Calvinian plan; and I shall set forth the *left leg*, in order to show that the honour of God's *holiness* is as incompatible with Calvinism, as light with darkness. Mr. Toplady's arguments are produced under No. 1. with the number of the page in his book where he advances them. In the opposite column, under No. 2. the

stratagem of the Calvinists to say, “Election depends upon God's love only, but damnation depends upon our sin only;” break the thin shell of this sophism, and you will find this bitter kernel; “God's distinguishing love elects some to unavoidable holiness and finished salvation; and his distinguishing wrath reprobates all the rest of mankind to remediless sin and eternal damnation.” For, the moment the sin of reprobates is necessary, remediless, and ensured by *the decree of the MEANS*, it follows that *absolute reprobation* to necessary, remediless sin, is the same thing as *absolute reprobation* to eternal damnation; because such a damnation is the *unavoidable* consequence of *remediless sin*.

When the letter-writer has absurdly denied Calvinian reprobation, he insinuates, p. 5. that “*everlasting torments*” and “*being unavoidably damned*,” are not the necessary consequences of the decree of Calvinian election; “*nor* [says he] *can they be fairly deduced from THE DECREE OF REPROBATION*.”—So, now, the secret is out! Our author, after denying reprobation, informs us that there is a Calvinian *DECREE OF REPROBATION*. But if there be such a decree, why did he oppose it, p. 2.? And if there be no such decree, why does he mention it, p. 5. where he hints that ensured damnation *cannot be fairly deduced from it*? Now, if he, or any Calvinist in the world, can prove that, *upon the Calvinian plan*, among the thousands of Calvin's reprobates, who are yet in their mothers' wombs, *one* of them can, any how, avoid finished damnation, I solemnly engage myself before the public, to get my Checks burnt at Charing-cross by the common hangman, on any day which Mr. Hill, Mr. Toplady, and Mr. McGowan will please to appoint. But if the Calvinists cannot do this, and if the *Calvinian decree of reprobation* ensures the necessary, remediless sin, and the unavoidable finished damnation of one and all the reprobates of Calvin, born or unborn; Mr. McGowan, and Dr. Gill, whom he quotes, insult common sense, when they intimate, that ensured damnation “*cannot be fairly deduced from the decree of reprobation*.” How much less candid are the letter-writer and Dr. Gill, than Mr. Toplady and Zanchius, who *fairly* tell us, p. 75. “*The condemnation* [i. e. the damnation] *of the reprobate is NECESSARY and IRRESISTIBLE!*”

The letter writer tells us, p. 6. “what ensures holiness must ensure glory; election [i. e. Calvinian election] doth so, and glory must follow.” This is the *right leg* of Calvinism: let her stand upon the *left leg*, and you have this “*doctrine of grace*!” *what ensures* remediless sin, *must ensure* damnation; Calvinian reprobation *doth so*, and damnation *MUST FOLLOW*. I would as soon bow to Dagon, as to this doctrine of remediless sin and ensured wickedness. O ye controversial writers of the *Gospel Magazine!* if you will confirm “*Arminian teachers*” in their attachment to the holy election and righteous reprobation preached by St. Paul, and in their detestation of the Antinomian election and barbarous reprobation which support your doctrinal peculiarities, only vindicate your election as *inconsistently* as Mr. McGowan, and your reprobation as *openly* as Mr. Toplady.—[See two other notes on the same performance; the one under the Arg. xxxviii. and the other under the Arg. lxvii.]

reader will find my *answer*, which is nothing but Mr. Toplady's own arguments, retorted in such a manner as to defend the second Gospel axiom, which Calvinism entirely overthrows. No. 1. displays the unguarded manner in which Mr. Toplady defends the first Gospel axiom. To form No. 2. I only make his arguments stand upon the other leg, and by this simple method I show the lameness of Calvinism, and the infamy which she pours upon God's holiness and goodness, under fair shows of regard for these adorable attributes.

THE RIGHT LEG of Calvinism, or the Calvinian doctrine of election and NECESSARY holiness.

ARG. II. No. 1. [page 17.] "I affirm with *Scripture*, that they [the *elect*] cannot be *saved* without *sanctification* and *obedience*. Yet is not their *salvation* precarious: for, that very decree of *election*, by which they were nominated and ordained to eternal *life*, ordained their intermediate *renewal* after the image of *God*, in *righteousness* and true *holiness*. Nay, that *renewal* is itself the dawn and beginning of actual *salvation*."

RIGHT LEG.

ARG. III. No. 1. [page 17.] "The *elect* could no more be *saved* without personal *holiness*, than they could be *saved* without personal existence. And why? because God's own decree secures the *means* as well as the *end*, and accomplishes the *end* by the *means*. The same gratuitous predestination, which ordained the existence of the *elect*, as men; ordained their *purification*, as *saints*; and

THE LEFT LEG of Calvinism, or the Calvinian doctrine of reprobation and NECESSARY wickedness.

ANSWER. No. 2. I affirm with Calvinism, that the *reprobates* cannot be *damned* without *wickedness* and *disobedience*. Yet is not their *damnation* precarious: for, that very decree of *reprobation*, by which they were nominated and ordained to eternal *death*, ordained their intermediate *conformity* to the image of the *devil*, in *sin* and true *wickedness*. Nay, that *conformity* is itself the dawn and beginning of actual *damnation*.

LEFT LEG.

ANSWER. No. 2. The *reprobates* could no more be *damned* without personal *wickedness*, than they could be *damned* without personal existence. And why? because God's own decree secures the *means* as well as the *end*, and accomplishes the *end* by the *means*. The same gratuitous predestination which ordained the existence of the *reprobate*, as men; ordained their *pollution*, as *sinner*s;

they were ordained to *both*, in order to their being finally and completely *saved in Christ* with eternal glory.” and they were ordained to *both*, in order to their being finally and completely *damned in Adam* with eternal shame.

Before I produce the next argument, I think it is proper to observe, that the *Election of Grace*, which St. Paul defends, is not, as Calvin supposes, an *absolute* election to eternal life, through *necessitated* holiness: an election this, which in the very nature of things, drags after it an *absolute* reprobation to eternal death, through *remediless* sin. But the apostle means a gratuitous election to the privileges of the best covenant of peculiarity,—a most gracious covenant this, which is known under the name of *Christianity*—*The Gospel of Christ*, or simply *The Gospel*, by way of eminence. For, as by a partial election of distinguishing favour, the Jews were once chosen to be God’s *peculiar people*, [at which time the Gentiles were reprobated, with respect to Jewish privileges; being left under the *inferior* Gospel dispensation of reprieved Adam, and spared Noah,] so, when the Jews provoked God to reject them from being his peculiar people, he elected the Gentiles, to whom he sent *the Gospel of Christ*: he *elects* them, I say, and *called* them to believe *this* precious Gospel, and *to be holy in all manner of conversation*, as becomes *Christians*. But, far from absolutely electing these Gentiles to eternal salvation, through unavoidable holiness Calvinistically imposed upon them, he charged them by his messengers to make *their Christian calling and election sure*, lest they also should be *cut off*, as the Jews had been, for not making their *Jewish calling and election sure*. In short, the *election of grace*, mentioned in the Scriptures, is a gratuitous election to run the *Christian* race with Paul, Peter, and James; rather than the *Jewish* race with Moses, David, and Daniel; or the race of *Gentilism* with Adam, Enoch, and Noah. It is a *gracious* election, which implies no *merciless, absolute* reprobation of the rest of mankind. And the Calvinists are greatly mistaken, when they confound *this* election, with our *judicial* election to receive the crown of life, a rewarding crown this, the receiving of which depends, 1. On the *grace* of God in Christ, and 2. On the *voluntary obedience* of faith; and will be judicially bestowed according to the *impartiality* of justice; and not according to the *partiality* of grace.

RIGHT LEG.

ARG. IV. No. 1. [page 18.] "God the Father hath chosen us in *Christ*, before the foundation of the world, that we should [not *"be saved do what we will;"* but] *be holy and without blame before him in love*, Eph. i. 7. Election is always followed by *regeneration*, and *regeneration* is the source of all good works."

RIGHT LEG.

ARG. V. No. 1. [page 18.] "We [the elect] are his subsequent workmanship, created anew in *Christ Jesus* unto good works, which God hath *fore-ordained* that we should walk in them. Consequently it does not follow from the doctrine of absolute predestination, that 'the elect shall be saved, do what they will.' On the contrary, they are chosen as much to *holiness* as to *heaven*; and are fore-ordained to walk in good works, by virtue of their election from eternity, and of their conversion in time."

RIGHT LEG.

ARG. VI. No. 1. [page 18, 19.] "Yet again, God hath from the beginning [i. e. from everlasting, &c.] chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 2 Thess. ii. 13. All, therefore, who are chosen to salvation, are no less unalterably

LEFT LEG.

ANSWER. No. 2. God the Father hath reprobated us in *Adam*, before the foundation of the world, that we should [not *be damned do what we will; but*] *be unholy and full of blame before him in malice*. Reprobation is always followed by apostacy; and apostacy is the source of all bad works.

LEFT LEG.

ANSWER. No. 2. We [the reprobates] are his subsequent workmanship, created anew in *Adam* unto bad works, which God hath *fore-ordained* that we should walk in them. Consequently it does not follow from the doctrine of absolute predestination, that "the reprobates shall be damned, do what they will." On the contrary, they are reprobated as much to wickedness as to hell; and are fore-ordained to walk in bad works, by virtue of their reprobation from eternity, and of their reprobation from eternity, and of their perversion in time.

LEFT LEG.

ANSWER. No. 2. Yet again, God hath from the beginning [i. e. from everlasting] reprobated you to damnation through pollution of the spirit and disbelief of the truth. All, therefore, who are reprobated to damnation, are no less unalterably destined to

destined to *holiness* and *faith* in the mean while. And if so, it is giving God himself the lie to say, that '*the elect shall be saved, do what they will.*' For the *elect*, like the blessed person who *redeemed* them, come into the world not to do their own will, but the will of him that sent them: and this is the will of God concerning them, even their *sanctification*. Hence they are expressly said to be *elect* unto *obedience*. Not indeed *chosen* because of *obedience*, but *chosen* unto it: for works are not the foundation of *grace*, but streams flowing from it. *Election* does not depend upon *holiness*, but *holiness* depends upon *election*. So far, therefore, is *predestination* from being subversive of *good* works; that *predestination* is the *primary cause* of all the *good* works, which have been and shall be wrought, from the beginning to the end of time."

wickedness and *unbelief* in the mean while. And, if so, it is giving God himself the lie to say, that "*the reprobates shall be damned do what they will.*" For the *reprobate*, like the blessed person who *rejected* them, come into the world not to do their own will, but the will of him that sent them: and this is the will of God concerning them, even their *wickedness*. Hence they are expressly said to be *reprobated* unto *disobedience*. Not indeed *reprobated* because of *disobedience*, but *reprobated* unto it: for works are not the foundation of *wrath*, but streams flowing from it. *Reprobation* does not depend upon *wickedness*, but *wickedness* depends upon *reprobation*. So far, therefore, is *predestination* from being subversive of *bad* works; that *predestination* to death is the *primary cause* of all the *bad* works, which have been and shall be wrought, from the beginning to the end of time.

Dreadfully crooked as the *left* leg of Mr. Toplady's system is, it perfectly agrees with the *right* leg: i. e. with his crooked *election*, and his bandy *predestination*. He may deny it as absolutely as prisoners at the bar deny what is laid to their charge: but their denial goes for nothing: the witnesses are called in, and I produce two, who are capital, and to whom I suppose Mr. Toplady will hardly object. The first is *Zanchius*, and the second is his ingenious translator, who says in his translation, p. 50. "He [man] fell in consequence of the divine decree."—*Observ.* p. 7. "Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of this absolute, omnipotent will of God."—"Whatever things come to pass, come to pass necessarily."—*Ibid.* "Whatever man does, he does necessarily."—Page 15. "All things turn out according to divine *predestination*; not only the works we do out-

wardly, but even the thoughts we think inwardly."—P. 7. "The will of God is the *primary* and supreme cause of *all* things."—P. 11. "The *sole* cause why some are saved and others perish, proceeds from his *willing* the salvation of the former, and the perdition of the latter."—P. 15. "We can *only* do what God from eternity *willed* and foreknew we *should*."—P. 7. "No *free will* of the creature can resist the will of God."—P. 19. "The purpose or decree of God signifies his everlasting appointment of some men to life, and of others to death: which appointment flows *entirely* from his *own* free and sovereign *will*."—P. 57. "If between the elect and the reprobate, there was not a great gulf fixed, so that neither *can be otherwise* than *they are*, then the will of God [which is the *alone* cause why some are chosen and others not] would be rendered of no effect."—P. 56. "Nor would his word be true with regard to the non-elect, if it was *possible* for them to be saved."—P. 15. "The condemnation of the reprobate is *necessary* and *irresistible*."—P. 25. "God worketh *all* things in *all* men, even *wickedness* in the wicked."

On these propositions, the most unguarded words of which I have produced in italics, I rest the *left* leg of Calvinism; and taking my leave of the translation of Zanchius, I return to the *vindication* of the *decrees*, and continue to make Mr. Toplady's doctrine of grace stand "*on its legs*," that is, on *absolute reprobation* to death, as well as on *absolute election* to life.

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ARG. VII. No. 1. [page 19.] "Reason also joins with Scripture, in asserting the indispensable necessity of *sanctification* upon the footing of the most absolute and irrespective *election*: or, in other words, that the certainty of the *end* does not supersede, but *ensure* the intervention of the *means*."

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ARG. VIII. No. 1. [page 21, 22.] "It was necessary that, as *sinner*s, they [the elect] should

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ANSWER. No. 2. Reason also joins with Scripture, in asserting the indispensable necessity of *wickedness*, upon the footing of the most absolute and irrespective *reprobation*: or, in other words, that the certainty of the *end* does not supersede, but *ensure* the intervention of the *means*.

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ANSWER. No. 2. It was necessary that, as *holy*, they [the reprobate] should not only be *ap-*

not only be *redeemed from punishment*, and entitled to *heaven*; but endued moreover with an internal meetness for that inheritance. This internal meetness for *heaven* can only be wrought by the *restoring* agency of God the *Holy Ghost*, who *graciously* engaged and took upon himself, in the covenant of *peace*, to *renew* and *sanctify* all the *elect* people of God; saying, *I will put my law in their minds.*—*Elect*, &c. through *sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.*—*Election*, though productive of *good* works, is not founded upon them: on the contrary, they are one of the *glorious ends*, to which they are chosen. *Saints* do not bear the *root*, but the *root* them. *Elect* unto *obedience*. They who have been *elected*, &c. shall experience the *Holy Spirit's sanctification*, in beginning, advancing, and perfecting the work of *grace* in their souls.—The *elect*, &c. are made to *obey* the commandments of God, and to imitate *Christ*, &c. I said, *made to obey*. Here perhaps the *unblushing* Mr. Wesley may ask, are the *elect* then mere machines? I answer, no. They are made *willing* in the day of God's power.”*

pointed to punishment, and entitled to *hell*; but endued moreover with an internal meetness for that inheritance.—This internal meetness for *hell*, can only be wrought by the *perverting* agency of [the Manichean] god the *unholy* ghost, who *officiously* engaged and took upon himself, in the covenant of *wrath*, to *pervert* and *defile* all the *reprobate* people of God; saying, *I will put my law in their minds.*—*Reprobate*, &c. through *pollution of the spirit unto disobedience.*—*Reprobation*, though productive of *bad* works, is not founded upon them: on the contrary, they are one of the *inglorious ends*, to which they are *reprobated*. *Sinners* do not bear the *root*, but the *root* them. *Reprobate* unto *disobedience*.—They who have been *reprobated*, &c. shall experience the *wicked spirit's pollution*, in beginning, advancing, and perfecting the work of *sin* in their souls.—The *reprobates*, &c. are made to *disobey* the commandments of God, and to imitate *Satan*, &c. I said, *made to disobey*. Here perhaps the *blushing* Mr. Wesley may ask, are the *reprobates* then mere machines? I answer, no. They are made *willing* in the day of God's power.

* Here Mr. Toplady adds, “and I believe nobody ever yet heard of a *willing machine*.” But he is mistaken: for all *moral* philosophers call *machine* whatever is fitted for free motions, and yet has no power to begin and determine its own motions. Now *willing* being the motion of a *spirit*, if a spirit cannot *will* but as it is *necessarily made to will*, it is as void of a self-determining principle, as a fire-engine, and of consequence it is [*morally speaking*] as mere a *machine*.

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ARG. XI. No. 1. [page 23, 24.] "God decreed to bring his *elect* to glory, in a way of *sanctification*, and in *no other* way but that. If so, cries Mr. Wesley, 'They shall be *saved*, whether they are *sanctified* or no.' What, notwithstanding their *sanctification* is, itself, an essential branch of the decree concerning them? The man may as well affirm that *Abraham* might have been the progenitor of nations though he had died in infancy, &c. Equally illogical is Mr. Wesley's impudent slander, that 'the *elect* shall be *saved* do what they will,' i. e. whether they be *holy* or not."

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ARG. X. No. 1. [page 20.] "Paul's travelling and Paul's *utterance*, were as certainly and as necessarily included in the decree of the *means*, as his *preaching* was determined by the decree of the *end*."

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ARG. XI. No 1. [page 28, 29.] "Love when [Calvinistically] predicated of God, signifies his eternal *benevolence*: i. e. his everlasting will, purpose, and determination, to *deliver*, *bless*, and *save* his [*elect*] people. In order to the eventual accomplishment of that *salvation* in the next world,

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ANSWER. No. 2. God decreed to bring his *reprobate* to hell in a way of *sinning*, and in *no other* way but that. If so, cries Mr. Wesley, "they shall be *damned*, whether they *sin* or no."—What, notwithstanding their *sinning* is, itself, an essential branch of the decree concerning them? "The man may as well affirm, that *Paul* might have preached the Gospel, *viva voce*, in fifty different regions, without travelling a step!" P. 23. Equally illogical is Mr. Wesley's impudent slander, that "the *reprobate* shall be *damned*, do what they will," i. e. whether they be *wicked* or not.

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ANSWER. No. 2. The rich glutton's gluttony, and his *unmercifulness*, were as certainly and as necessarily included in the decree of the *means*, as his being *tormented* in hell was determined by the decree of the *end*.

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ANSWER. No 2. *Hate*, when Calvinistically predicated of God, signifies his eternal *ill will*: i. e. his everlasting will, purpose, and determination, to *enthral*, *curse*, and *damn* his [*reprobated*] people.—In order to the eventual accomplishment of that *damnation* in the next world *wickedness* is given

grace is given them in this, to preserve them, (and preserve them it does) from doing the *evil* they otherwise would. This is all the *election* which Calvinism, &c. contends for; even a predestination to *holiness* and *heaven*."

them in this, to preserve them, (and preserve them it does) from doing the *good* they otherwise would. This is all the *reprobation* which Calvinism contends for; even a predestination to *wickedness* and *hell*."

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ARG. XII. No. 1. [page 33.]
 "Now, if it be the Father's will, that *Christ* should lose *none* of his *elect*: if *Christ* himself, in consequence of their covenant-donation to him, does actually give unto them *eternal life*, and solemnly avers, that they shall never *perish*: if God be so *for* them, that none can hinder their *salvation*, &c. if they cannot be *condemned*, and nought shall separate them from the *love* of *Christ*; it clearly and inevitably follows, that, Not one of the *elect* can *perish*; but they must all necessarily be *saved*. Which *salvation* consists as much in the *recovery* of moral rectitude *below*, as in the *enjoyment* of *eternal blessedness above*."

ANSWER. No. 2. Now, if it be the Father's will, that *Satan* should lose *none* of his *reprobate*; if *Satan* himself, in consequence of their covenant-donation to him, does actually give unto them *eternal death*, and solemnly avers, that they shall never *escape*; if God be so *against* them, that none can hinder their *damnation*, &c. if they cannot be *justified*, and nought shall separate them from the *hate* of *Christ*; it clearly and inevitably follows, that, Not one of the *reprobate* can *escape*: but they must all necessarily be *damned*.—Which *damnation* consists as much in the *being stripped* of moral rectitude *on earth*, as in the *enduring* of *eternal torments in hell*."

By such wrested texts, and delusive arguments as these, it is, that Mr. Toplady has vindicated God's *holiness* upon Calvinian principles. Now, as he requests that Calvinism may stand *upon its legs*, that is, upon *absolute election* and *absolute reprobation*; I appeal to all the unprejudiced world have I not made the Diana of the Calvinists stand straight? Have I not suffered her to rest upon her *left leg*, as well as upon the *right*? If that leg terminates in a horribly cloven foot; is it Mr. Wesley's fault or mine? Have we formed the doctrinal image which is set up in mystical Geneva? Is the quotation produced in my motto forged? Is not *absolute reprobation* one of "the

doctrines of grace" [so called] as well as *absolute election*? May I not show the *full* face of Calvinism as well as her *side* face? If a man pay me a guinea, have I not a right to suspect that it is false, and to turn it, if he that wants to pass it will never let me see the reverse of it in a clear light? Can Mr. Toplady blame me for holding forth Calvinian *reprobation*? Can he find fault with me for *showing* what he says, "I am not only bound to *show*, but to *defend*?" If Calvinism be "*the doctrine of grace*," which I must engage sinners to espouse, why should I serve her as the soldiers did the thieves on the cross? Why, at least, should I break *one* of her legs. If ever I bring her into the pulpit, she shall come up on *both* "*her legs*." The chariot of my *Diana*, shall be drawn by the biting serpent, as well as by the silly dove; I will preach Calvinian *reprobation*, as well as Calvinian *election*. I will be a man of "*conscience and honour*."

And now, reader, may I not address thy *conscience* and *reason*, and ask; if all the fallen angels had laid their heads together a thousand years, to contrive an artful way of *reproaching the living God*—the *Holy One of Israel*, could they have done it more effectually than by getting myriads of Protestants [even all the Calvinists] and myriads of Papists [even all the Dominicans, Jansenists, &c.] to pass the false coin of *Absolute Election* and *Absolute Reprobation*, with this deceitful alluring inscription—*Necessary holiness unto the Lord*, and this detestable Manichean motto on the reverse, *Necessary wickedness unto the Lord*? And has not Mr. Toplady presumed too much upon thy credulity, in supposing that thou wouldst never have wisdom enough to look at the black reverse of the shining medal by which he wants to bribe thee into Calvinism?

SECTION III.

An Answer to some appeals to SCRIPTURE and REASON, by which Mr. Toplady attempts to support the ABSOLUTENESS and HOLINESS of the Calvinian Decrees.

LET us see if Mr. Toplady is happier in the choice of his Scriptural and rational illustrations, than in that of his arguments. To show that God's decrees respecting man's life and salvation are absolute, or, [which is all one] to show that the decree of the *end* necessarily includes the decree of the *means*, he appeals to the case of Hezekiah thus:

ARG. XIII. [page 20.] "God resolved that *Hezekiah* should live fifteen years longer than *Hezekiah* expected, &c. It was as much

comprised in God's decree, that *Hezekiah* should eat, drink, and sleep, during those fifteen years ; and that he should not jump into the sea, &c. as that fifteen years should be added to his life."—From this quotation it is evident, that Mr. Toplady would have us believe, that none of God's decrees are *conditional*: that when God decrees the *end*, he does it always in such a manner as to ensure the *means* necessary in order to bring about the *end* ; and that *Hezekiah* is appealed to as a proof of this doctrine. Unfortunate appeal ! If I had wanted to prove just the contrary, I do not know where I should have found an example more demonstrative of Mr. Toplady's mistake : witness the following account. *Hezekiah was sick unto death : and Isaiah came to him and said, Thus saith [thus decreeth] the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live. Isa. xxxviii. 1.* Here is an explicit, peremptory decree :—a decree where no condition is expressed :—a decree which wears a *negative* aspect, *Thou shalt not live*, and a *positive* form, *Thou shalt die*. The means of executing the decree was already upon *Hezekiah* : he was *sick unto death*. And yet, so far was he from thinking that the decree of the *end* absolutely included that of the *means*, that he set himself upon praying for *life and health* ; yea, upon doing it as a Jewish perfectionist. Then *Hezekiah turned his face towards the wall, and prayed, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, &c. and Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith [thus decreeth] the Lord, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years, ver. 2, 5.* From this account it is evident, that *Hezekiah* might as easily have reversed the decree about his *life*, by *stabbing* or *drowning* himself, as he reversed the decree about his *death*, by *weeping* and *praying* ; and that Mr. Toplady has forgotten himself as much in producing the case of *Hezekiah* in support of Calvinism, as if he had appealed to our Lord's sermon on the mount in defence of the lawless Gospel of the day.

A kind of infatuation attends the wisest men who openly fight the battles of error. In the end, their swords, like that of the champion of the Philistines, do their cause more mischief than service. Mr. Toplady will perhaps afford us another instance of it. After producing *Hezekiah* to establish the *absoluteness* of God's decrees, he calls in the first Jewish hero. *Joshua* is brought to demonstrate that the decree of the *end* always binds upon us an *unavoidable* submission to the decree of the *means* ; or to speak more intelligibly, that God's decrees to bless or to curse, are always absolute, and *necessitate* us to use the *means* leading to his blessing or his curse.

ARG. XIV. [page 23.] "Prior to the taking of Jericho, it was revealed to Joshua, that he should certainly be master of the place. Nay, so *peremptory* was the *decree*, and so express the revelation of it, that it was predicted as if it had already taken effect: *I have given into thy hand Jericho, &c.* This assurance, than which nothing could be more absolute, did not tie up Joshua's hands from action, and make him sit down without using the *means*, which were *no less* appointed than the *end*. On the contrary, &c.—Here we are given to understand, that Joshua and the Israelites could never cross any of God's gracious *decrees* by neglecting the *means* of their accomplishment; because they were *necessitated* to use those means." Thus is Joshua pressed into the service of Calvinian *necessity*, and the *absoluteness* of God's decrees: Joshua, who of all the men in the world, is most unlikely to support the tottering ark of Calvinian necessity. For when he saw in the wilderness the carcasses of several hundred thousand persons, to whom God had promised the good land of Canaan with an oath, and who nevertheless *entered not in because of unbelief*, he saw several hundred thousand proofs that God's promises are not *absolute*; and that when he deals with rewardable and punishable agents, the decree of the *end* is not *unconditional*, and does by no means include an irresistible decree, which binds upon them the *unavoidable* use of the means.

But consider we the peculiar case of Joshua himself. *The Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life:—I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,* Josh. i. 5. Now this peremptory decree of the *end*, far from necessarily including the *means*, actually failed by a single flaw in the use of the *means*. The disobedience of *Achan* reversed the decree: for he disregarded the means or condition which God had appointed: *Turn not to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest,* Josh i. 7. Hence it is, that when *Achan* had turned to the left, the decree failed, and we find Joshua prostrate before the ark a whole day, with his clothes rent, and dust upon his head: lamenting the flight of Israel before *Ai*, and wishing that he had been content, and had dwelt on the other side Jordan. Nor do I see in God's answer to him, the least hint of Mr. Toplady's doctrine. *Why liest thou upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant: for they have even taken of the accursed thing.—Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing,* Josh. vii. 1, 13.

Hence it appears, that when Mr. Toplady appeals to *Joshua* in defence of the *absoluteness* of God's decrees, he displays his skill in the art of logic, as much as if he appealed to the *preremptoriness* of the famous decree, *Yet forty days, and [ungodly] Nineveh shall be destroyed*: and yet penitent Nineveh was spared: so unscriptural is the assertion, that the decree of the *end ensures* the use of the *means*, when God tries moral agents in the day of salvation, in order to punish or reward them according to their works in the day of judgment!

Mr. Toplady supports these unfortunate appeals to *Scripture*, by the following appeal to *Reason*.

ARG. XV. [page 24.] "Suppose it were infallibly revealed to an army, or to any single individual, that the former should certainly gain such a battle, and the latter certainly win such a race, would not the army be mad to say, Then we will not fight a stroke? would not the racer be insane to add, Nor will I move so much as one of my feet, &c. Equally illogical is Mr. Wesley's impudent slander, that *The elect shall be saved do what they will, &c.*—Either he is absolutely unacquainted with the first principles of reasoning; or he offers up the knowledge he has, as a whole burnt-sacrifice on the altar of malice, calumny, and falsehood."

This severe censure will appear Calvinistically gratuitous if we consider, that it is entirely founded upon the impropriety of the illustrations produced by Mr. Toplady. If he had exactly represented the case, he would have said, "Suppose it were infallibly revealed to an army, that they should certainly gain such a battle; that they could do nothing towards the victory by their own fighting; that the battle was fought and *absolutely* won for them 1700 years ago: that if they refused to fight to-day, or if they ran away, or were taken prisoners, their triumph would not be less certain; and that putting their bottle to their neighbours' mouths, and defiling their wives, instead of fighting, would only make them sing victory louder, on a certain day, called a *day of power*, when Omnipotence would sovereignly exert itself in their behalf, and put all their enemies to flight:—suppose again, it were revealed to a *racer*, that he should certainly win such a race, and receive the prize, whether he ran *to-day* backward or forward: because his winning the race did not at all depend upon *his own* swift running, but upon the swiftness of a great racer, who yesterday ran the race for him, and who *absolutely* imputes to him his swift running, even while he gets out of the course to chase an ewe-lamb, or visit a Delilah;—that the covenant which *secures* him the prize, is *unconditionally* ordered in all things and sure; that though he may be unwilling to run *now*, yet in a day of irresistible

power he shall be made willing to fly and receive the prize ; and that his former loitering will only set off the greatness of the power, which is *absolutely* engaged to carry him and all elect racers, quite from Egypt to Canaan in one hour, if they have loitered till the eleventh hour ;"—suppose, I say, Mr. Toplady had given us such a *just* view of the case, who could charge the soldiers with "*madness*," and the racer with "*being insane*," if they agreed to say, "We will neither fight nor run, but take our ease and indulge ourselves, till the day of power comê, in which we shall *irresistibly* be made to gain the battle, and to win the race?"

From these *rectified* illustrations it appears, if I am not mistaken, 1. That, when Mr. Wesley advanced his consequence, he neither "*showed himself absolutely unacquainted with the first principles of reasoning*;" nor "*offered up the knowledge he has, as a whole burnt-sacrifice on the altar of malice, calumny, and falsehood*;"—and 2. That when Mr. Toplady's appeals to *Scripture* and *Reason* are made *fairly* to stand upon their legs, they do his doctrine as little service as his limping arguments.

SECTION IV.

An answer to the arguments, by which Mr. Toplady endeavours to reconcile Calvinian Reprobation with Divine JUSTICE.

WE have seen how unhappily the translator of Zanchius has reconciled his doctrines of *grace* and *absolute election* with God's *holiness*: let us now see if he has been more successful in reconciling his doctrines of *wrath* and *absolute reprobation* with Divine *justice*.

ARG. XVI. [page 35.] "*Justice consists in rendering to every man his due.*"—Mr. Toplady gives us this *narrow* definition of *justice* to make way for this argument: God owes us no blessing, and therefore he may *gratuitously* give us an everlasting curse. He does not owe us *heaven*, and therefore he may *justly* appoint that *eternal sin* and *damnation* shall be our *unavoidable* portion.—But, is not a king *unjust* when he *punishes* an *unavoidable* fault with uninterrupted torture, as well as when he refuses to pay his just debts?

ARG. XVII. [*Ibid.*] "God is not a debtor to any man."—True, [strictly speaking:] but, 1. Does not God *owe* to *himself* to behave *like himself*, that is, like a *gracious* and *just* Creator, towards every man?—2. When God, by his promise, has engaged himself *judicially* to render to every man *according to his works*, is it just in him to *necessitate* some men to work righteousness, and others to work iniquity,

that he may reward the former, and punish the latter, according to arbitrary decrees of absolute election to life, and of absolute reprobation to death?—And, 3. Do not the Sacred Writers observe that God has condescended to *make himself* a debtor to his creatures by his gracious promises? Did Mr. Toplady never read, *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and look, what he layeth out it shall be paid again?* Prov. xix. 17. When evangelical Paul hath fought a good fight, does he not look for a crown from the just Judge, and declare that *God is not unrighteous to forget our labour of love?* and, *If we confess our sins,* is not God bound by his justice, as well as by his faithfulness, to *forgive and cleanse us?*—1 John i. 9.

ARG. XVIII. [*Ibid.*] “If it can be proved that He [God] owes salvation to every rational being he has made; then, and then only will it follow, that God is *unjust* in not paying this debt of salvation to each, &c.—What shadow of injustice can be fastened on his conduct, for in some cases withholding what he does not owe?”—This argument is introduced by Mr. Toplady in a variety of dresses. The flaw of it consists in supposing that there can be no medium between eternal salvation, and appointing to eternal damnation; and that, because God may absolutely elect as many of his creatures as he pleases to a crown of glory, he may *absolutely* reprobate as many as Calvinism pleases to eternal sin and everlasting burnings. The absurdity of this conclusion will be discovered by the reader, if he look at it through the glass of the following illustrations. Mr. Toplady is not obliged, by any rule of justice, to give Mr. Wesley a hundred pounds, because he owes him no money; and therefore Mr. T. may give Mr. Wesley a hundred gratuitous stripes, without breaking any rule of justice. The king may without injustice gratuitously give a thousand pounds to one man, ten thousand to another, a hundred to a third, and nothing to a fourth; and therefore the king may also, without injustice, gratuitously give a hundred stabs to one man, a thousand to another, and ten thousand to a third; or, he may *necessitate* them to offend, that he may hang and burn them with a *show* of justice.

ARG. XIX. [page 36.] “I defy any a man to show in what single respect the actual limitation of happiness itself is a jot more just and equitable (in a Being possessed of infinite power) than the decreative limitation of the persons who shall enjoy that happiness.”—The question is not whether God can justly *limitate the happiness of man*, or the *number of the men*, whom he will raise to *such and such heights* of happiness. This we never disputed: on the contrary, we assert

with our Lord, that when God gives degrees of happiness, *as* ■ *Benefactor*, he may *do what he pleases with his own* ; he may give *five talents* to one man, or to *five thousand men* ; and *two talents* to *two men*, or to *two millions* of men.—Wherein then does the fallacy of Mr. Toplady's argument consist ? In this most irrational and unjust conclusion : God may, *without injustice*, limit the happiness of his human creatures, and the number of those, who shall enjoy *such and such* a degree of happiness ; and therefore, he may also, *without injustice*, absolutely reprobate as many of his unborn creatures as he pleases, and decree to protract their infernal torments to all eternity, after having first decreed their *necessary* fall into sin, and their *necessary* continuance in sin, as *necessary means*, in order to their *necessary end*, which is *eternal damnation*. Is not this an admirable *Vindication of Calvin's Decrees* ? Who does not see that the conclusion has no more to do with the premiss, than in the following argument : The Lord Chancellor may without injustice present Mr. T. to a living of fifty pounds, or to one of two hundred pounds, or he may reprobate Mr. T. from all the crown livings ; and therefore the Lord Chancellor may, *without injustice*, sue Mr. T. for fifty pounds, or two hundred pounds, whenever he pleases. What name shall we give to the Logic which deals in such arguments as these ?

ARG. XX. [page 37.] “ He [*man*] derives his existence from God, and therefore [says Arminianism] “ God is bound to make his existence *happy*.” I would rather say, God is bound, both by the rectitude of his nature and by the promises of his Gospel, not to reprobate any man to remediless sin and eternal misery, till he has actually deserved such a dreadful reprobation, at least, by one thought, which he was not absolutely predestinated to think. But Calvinism says, that God absolutely reprobated ■ majority of men before they thought their first thought, or drew their first breath. If Mr. Toplady had stated the case in this plain manner, all his readers would have seen his doctrine of wrath without a veil, and would have shuddered at the sight.

ARG. XXI. [*Ibid.*] “ If God owe salvation to all his creatures *as such*, even the workers of iniquity will be saved, or God must cease to be just.”—I never heard any Arminian say that God owes *salvation*, i. e. *heavenly glory*, to all his creatures *as such* : for then all horses, being God's creatures as well as men, would be taken to heaven : but we maintain, that God will never mediate *necessary, remediless sin* upon any of his creatures, that he may infallibly punish them with eternal damnation. And we assert, if God had not gra-

ciously designed to replace all mankind in a state of initial salvation from sin and hell, according to the various dispensations of his redeeming grace, he would have punished Adam's *personal* sin by a *personal* damnation. Nor would he have suffered him to propagate his fallen race, unless the second Adam had extended the blessing of redemption so far as to save from eternal misery all who die in their infancy, and to put all who live long enough to act as *moral* agents, in a capacity of avoiding hell by *working out their own eternal salvation* in the day of their temporary salvation:—a day this, which inconsistent Calvinists call “*the day of grace.*”

Mr. Toplady, after decrying *our* doctrine of grace, as leading to gross iniquity, indirectly owns, that the *conditionality* of the promise of *eternal* salvation guards *our* Gospel against the charge of Antinomianism,—a dreadful charge this, which falls so heavily on Calvinism. Conscious that he cannot defend his *lawless, unconditional* election to eternal life, and his *wrathful, unconditional* reprobation to eternal death, without taking the *conditionality* of eternal salvation out of the way, he attempts to do it by the following dilemma.

ARG. XXII. [page 38.] “Is salvation due to a man that does *not* perform those *conditions*? If you say, *yes*; you jump, hand over head, into what you yourself call *Antinomianism*.—If you say, that salvation is not due to a man unless he *do fulfil the conditions*; it will follow, that man's own performances are *meritorious* of salvation, and bring God himself into debt.”

We answer, 1. To show the tares of Calvinism, Mr. Toplady raises an artificial night by confounding the *sparing* salvation of the Father—the *atoning* salvation of the Son—the *convincing, converting, and perfecting* salvation of the Spirit. Yea, he confounds *actual* salvation from a thousand temporal evils—*temporary* salvation from death and hell—*initial* salvation from the guilt and power of sin—*present* salvation into the blessings of Christianity, Judaism, or Gentilism—*continued* salvation into these blessings—*eternal* salvation from death and hell—and *eternal* salvation into glory and heaven:—he confounds, I say, *all* these degrees of salvation; which is as absurd as if he confounded all degrees of life—the life of an embryo—of a sucking child—of a school-boy—of a youth—of a man—of a departed saint—and of an angel. When he has thus shuffled his cards, and played the dangerous game of *confusion*, what wonder is it if he wins it, and makes his inattentive readers believe, that what can be affirmed with truth of *salvation into heavenly glory*, must be true also, when it is affirmed of *salvation from everlasting burnings*; and that because God does not owe *heaven and angelical honours* to unborn children, he may

justly reprobate them to *hell* and to *Satanical, remediless wickedness*, as the way to it.

2. Distinguishing what Mr. Toplady confounds, we do not scruple to maintain, that, though God is not bound to give *existence*, much less *heavenly glory*, to any creature; yet, all his creatures, who never personally offended him, have a *right* to expect at his hands *salvation from everlasting fire*, till they have deserved his *eternal and absolute reprobation* by committing some *personal, and avoidable* offence. Hence it is, that all mankind are born in a state of inferior salvation: for they are all born out of eternal fire; and to be out of hell is a considerable *degree of salvation*, unless we are suffered to live *unavoidably* to deserve everlasting burnings, which is the case of all Calvin's imaginary reprobates.

3. Mr. Toplady "throws out a barrel for the amusement of the whale, to keep him in play, and make him lose sight of the ship"—the *fire ship*. For, in order to make us lose sight of *absolute reprobation, remediless wickedness, and everlasting fire*, which [if Calvinism be true] is the *unavoidable* lot of the greatest part of mankind even in their mother's womb; he throws out this ambiguous expression, *salvation due*; just as if there were no medium between *salvation due*, and *Calvinian reprobation due*! whereas it is evident, that there is the medium of *non-creation*, or that of *destruction in a state of seminal existence*!

4. The flaw of Mr. Toplady's argument will appear in its proper magnitude, if we look at it through the following illustration. A whole regiment is led to the *left* by the colonel, whom the general wanted to turn to the *right*. The colonel, who is *personally* in the fault, is pardoned; and five hundred of the soldiers, who, by the overbearing influence of their colonel's disobedience, were *necessitated* to move to the *left*, are appointed to be hanged for not going to the right. The general sends to Geneva for a *Tertullus*, who vindicates the *justice* of the execution by the following speech. "*Preferment is not due to obedient soldiers, much less to soldiers who have necessarily disobeyed orders*; and therefore your gracious general acts consistently with *justice*, in appointing these five hundred soldiers to be hanged, for, as there is no medium between *not promoting* soldiers and *hanging* them, he might justly have hanged the whole regiment. He is not bound by any law, to give any soldier a captain's commission; and therefore he is perfectly *just*, when he sends these military reprobates to the gallows." Some of the auditors clap *Tertullus's* argument: P. O. cries out that it is "*most masterly*:" but a few of the soldiers are not quite convinced, and begin to question whether the

holy service of the *mild Saviour of the world*, is not preferable to the Antinomian service of the *absolute Reprobater* of countless myriads of unborn infants.

5. The other flaw of Mr. Toplady's dilemma consists in supposing that *Gospel worthiness* is incompatible with the Gospel: whereas all the doctrines of *justice*, which make *one half* of the Gospel, stand or fall with the doctrines of *evangelical worthiness*. We will shout it on the walls of mystic Geneva: they that follow Christ, shall *walk with him in white*, rather than they that follow antichrist; for they are [more] worthy.—*Watch and pray always, that you may be counted worthy to escape, and to stand rewardable before the Son of man.—Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, &c. knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. For he will say, in the great day of retribution, Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom, &c. for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, &c.—Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, &c. for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat, &c.—*The doctrine of *Pharisaic merit* we abhor; but the doctrine of *rewardable obedience* we honour, defend, and extol. Believers, let not Mr. Toplady beguile you of your reward through voluntary humility.—*If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.—Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.—For we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad. Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which ye have wrought.—So fight, that you may not be reprobated by remunerative justice.—So run, that you may [judicially] obtain an incorruptible crown.—Remember Lot's wife.—By patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory; and God, according to his gracious promises, will render you eternal life: for he is not untrue, to break his evangelical promise, nor unrighteous, to forget your work that proceedeth from love. Your persevering obedience shall be graciously rewarded by a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you at that day; and then great shall be your reward in heaven. For Christ himself hath said, Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.—My sheep follow me, and I give unto them eternal life in glory. For I am the author of eternal salvation to them that obey me. What can be plainer than this Gospel? Shall the absurd cries of Popery! Merit! &c. make us ashamed of Christ's disciples; of Christ's words; and of Christ himself? God forbid! Let the Scriptures—let God be true, though Mr. Toplady should be mistaken.*

ARG. XXIII. [page 38.] "If he [God] be not obliged, in justice, to save mankind, then neither is he unjust in *passing by* some men: nay, he *might*, had he so pleased, have *passed by* the whole of mankind, without electing any one individual of the fallen race; and yet have continued holy, *just*, and good."

True: he might have *passed them by* without fixing any blot upon his justice and goodness, if by *passing them by* Mr. T. means leaving them in the wretched state of *seminal* existence, in which state his vindictive justice found them after Adam's fall. For then, an *unknown* punishment, *seminally* endured, would have borne just proportion to an *unknown* sin, *seminally* committed. But if, by *passing some men by*, this gentleman means, as Calvinism does, "absolutely predestinating some men to *necessary*, *remediless* sin, and to unavoidable, eternal damnation;" we deny that God might *justly* have *passed by* the whole of mankind: we deny that he might *justly* have *passed by* one single man, woman, or child.—Nay, we affirm, that if we conceive Satan, or the evil principle of *Manes*, as exerting creative power, we could not conceive him worse employed than in forming an *absolute* reprobate in embryo; that is, "a creature unconditionally, and absolutely doomed to remediless wickedness and everlasting fire."

As the simple are frequently imposed upon by an artful substituting of the harmless word *passing by*, for the terrible word *absolutely reprobating to death*, I beg leave to show, by a simile, the vast difference there is between these two phrases. A king may without injustice *pass by* all the beggars in the streets, without giving them any bounty; because, if he does them no good in thus *passing them by*, he does them no harm. But suppose he called two captains of his guards, and said to the *first*, If you see me *pass by* little dirty beggars, without giving them an alms, throw them into the mire, or if their parents have cast them into the dirt, keep them there: then let the *second* captain follow with his men, and take all the dirty beggars who have thus been *passed by*, and throw them, for being dirty, into a furnace hotter than that of Nebuchadnezzar:—suppose, I say, the king *passed* his little indigent subjects *by* in this manner, would not his decree of *preterition* be a more than diabolical piece of cruelty? I need not inform my judicious readers, that the *passing by* of the king represents Calvinian *passing by*, that is, *absolute reprobation to death*:—that the *first* captain, who throws little beggars into the dirt, or keeps them there, represents the *decree of the means*, which *necessitates* the reprobate to *sin*, or to *continue* in sin;—and that the *second* captain represents the *decree of the end*, which *necessitates* them to go to everlasting burnings.

ARG. XXIV. [page 39.] Mr. Toplady endeavours to reconcile Calvinian reprobation with divine justice by an appeal "*to God's providential dealings with men in the present life.*" His verbose argument, stript of its Geneva dress, and brought naked to open light, may run thus : " If God may, without injustice, absolutely place the sons of Adam in circumstances of temporary misery, he may also, without injustice, reprobate them to eternal torments : but he may justly place the sons of Adam in circumstances of temporary misery ; witness his actually doing it : and therefore he may without injustice reprobate them to eternal torments and to remediless sin, as the way to those torments."—The flaw of this argument is in the first proposition, and consists in supposing, that because God can justly appoint us to suffer a *light affliction*, which [comparatively speaking] *is but for a moment, and which* [if we are not perversely wanting to ourselves] *will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. he can also justly appoint us to remediless wickedness and eternal damnation. This conclusion is all of a piece with the following argument. A father may justly punish his disobedient child with a rod, and give his sick child a bitter medicine ; and therefore he may justly break all his bones with a forge-hammer, and daily drench him with melted lead. To produce such absurd consequences without a mask, is sufficiently to answer them. See farther what is said upon Arg. xxviii.

ARG. XXV. [page 40.] Mr. Toplady is, if possible, still more abundantly mistaken, while, to prove the justice of Calvinian reprobation, he appeals to "*the real inequality of providential distributions below.*"—We cannot "*pronounce the great Father of all unjust, because he does not make all his offspring equally rich, good, and happy :*" and therefore, God may justly reprobate some of them to *eternal misery* ; just as if *inferior degrees of goodness and happiness* were the same thing as *remediless wickedness, and eternal misery* !

ARG. XXVI. [*Ibid.*] " The devils may be cast down to hell to be everlastingly damned, and be appointed thereto ; and it gives no great concern. No hard thoughts against God arise : no charge of cruelty, injustice," &c. Indeed, if Dr. Gill, whom Mr. Toplady quotes, insinuated, that God had *absolutely* predestinated myriads of angels to everlasting damnation, through the *appointed* means of *necessary* sin ; and that God had made this *appointment* thousands of years before most of those angels had any personal existence, it would give us *great concern*, both for the honour of God's justice, and for the angels so cruelly treated by free wrath. But as matters are, the case of

devils gives us no great concern, because they fell *knowingly, wilfully, and without necessity*. To the end of the day of their visitation they personally rejected God's gracious counsel towards them : and, as they obstinately refused to subserve the *judicial display* of his *remunerative bounty*, it is highly agreeable to reason and equity, that they should subserve the *judicial display* of his *vindictive justice*.

ARG. XXVII. [page 41.] "The king of Great Britain has unlimited right of peerage, &c. Will any body be so weak and perverse as to charge him with tyranny and injustice, only because it is not his will, though it is in his power, to make all his subjects noblemen ?"—This is another barrel thrown out to the whale. This illustration does not touch, but conceal the question. For the *similar* question is not whether the king is *unjust* in leaving gentlemen and tradesmen among the gentry and commonalty, but whether he could, *without injustice and tyranny*, pretend, that because he has an *unlimited right of peerage*, he has also an *unlimited right of* [what I beg leave to call] *felonage*,—a Calvinian right this, of appointing whom he pleases to rob and murder, that he may appoint whom he pleases to a cell in *Newgate*, and a swing at *Tyburn*. This is the true state of the case. If Mr. T. has cast a veil over it, it is a sign that he is not destitute of the feelings of *justice*, and that, if he durst look at his Manichean picture of God's sovereignty without a veil, he would turn from it with the same precipitancy, with which he would start back from the abomination of the Moabites, or from the grim idol to which mistaken Israelites sacrificed their children in the valley of *Hinnom*.

ARG. XXVIII. [page 42.] "Misery, though endured but for a year, &c. is in its own nature, and for the time being, as truly misery, as it would be if protracted ever so long, &c. And God can no more cease to be just for a year, or for a man's lifetime, than he can cease to be just for a century, or for ever. By the same rule that he can, and does, without impeachment of his moral attributes, permit *any* one being to be *miserable* for a *moment* ; he may permit that being to be miserable for a *much longer* time : and so on, *ad infinitum* ;"—that is, in plain English, *for ever*. The absurdity of this argument may be sufficiently pointed out by a similar plea. A surgeon may, without injustice, open an impostume in my breast, and give me pain for an hour, and therefore he may justly scarify me, and flay me alive ten years—A judge may, without impeachment of his justice, order a man to be burnt in the hand for a moment, and therefore his justice will continue unstained, if he order red-hot irons to be applied to that

man's hands and feet, back and breast, "*ad infinitum*." I hope that when Mr. Toplady threw this scrap of Latin over the nakedness of his *Diana*, his good nature suggested that she is too horrible to be looked at without a veil. But could he not have borrowed the language of mother church, without borrowing a maxim which might shock any inquisitor, and might have put *Bonner* himself to a stand?

ARG. XXIX. [page 44.] "He [God] permits, and has for near 6000 years permitted, the reign of *natural* evil. Upon the same principle, might he not extend its reign to—a never-ending duration?"—*He might*, if a never-ending line of *moral* evil, personally and avoidably brought on by *free agents upon themselves*, called for a never-ending line of *penal* misery: and our Lord himself says, that *he will*: these [the wicked, who have *finally* hardened themselves] shall go away into everlasting punishment—where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Matt. xxv. 46. Mark ix. 48.

ARG. XXX. [*Ibid.*] "But still the old difficulty [a difficulty which Arminianism will never solve,] &c. the old difficulty survives; how came moral evil to be *permitted*, when it might as easily have been hindered, by ■ Being of infinite goodness, power, and wisdom?"—Page 39. Mr. T. speaks partly the same language; giving us to understand as openly as he dares, that God worketh all things in all men, even wickedness in the wicked. His pernicious, though guarded insinuation, runs thus: "you will find it extremely difficult, [may I not say *impossible*?] to point out the difference between *permission* and *design*, in ■ Being possessed [as God most certainly is] of unlimited *wisdom* and unlimited *power*."—Hence we are given to understand, that, because God does not *absolutely hinder* the commission of sin, "it would non-plus all the sagacity of man, should we attempt clearly to show wherein the difference lies," between God's *permitting* sin, and his *designing* or *decreeing* sin, or [to speak with more candour] between God's placing free agents in a state of probation, with a strict charge not to sin, and between his being the author of sin. Is not this a "*most masterly*" "*Vindication of the decrees and providence of God*;" supposing you mean by *god*, the *sin-begetting* deity worshipped by the Manichees? This Antinomian blow at the root of divine holiness is dangerous: I shall therefore ward it off by various answers.

1. When God placed man in paradise, far from *permitting* him to sin, he *strictly forbid* him to do it. Is it right then in Mr. T. to call God "*the Permitter of sin*," when the Scriptures represent him as *the Forbidder of it*? Nay, is it not very wrong to pour shame upon

the holiness of God, and absurdity upon the reason of man, by making a Calvinistic world believe, that *forbidding* and *threatening* is one and the same thing with *permitting* and *giving leave* ; or at least, that the difference is so trifling, that “ *all the sagacity of man will find it extremely difficult, not to say impossible, clearly to point it out?* ” •

2. I pretend to a very little share of *all the sagacity of man* ; and yet, without being *non-plussed* at all, I hope to show by the following illustration, that there is a prodigious difference between *not hindering*, and *design*, in the case of the entering in of sin.

A general wants to try the faithfulness of his soldiers, that he may *reward* those who *will* fight, and *punish* those who *will* go over to the enemy ; in order to *display*, before all the army, his love of bravery, his hatred of cowardice, his remunerative goodness, and his impartial justice. To this end, he issues out a proclamation, importing that all the volunteers, who shall gallantly keep the field in such an important engagement, shall be made captains ; and that all those who shall go over to the enemy, shall be shot. I suppose him endued with infinite wisdom, knowledge, and power. By his *omniscience* he sees that some *will* desert : by his *omnipotence* he *could* indeed hinder them from doing it : for he *could* chain them all to so many posts stuck in the ground around their colours : but his *infinite wisdom* does not permit him to do it ; as it would be a piece of madness in him, to defeat by forcible means his design of *trying* the courage of his soldiers, in order to *reward* and *punish* them according to their *gallant* or *cowardly* behaviour in the field. And therefore, though he is persuaded that many will be shot, he puts his proclamation in force ; because, upon the whole, it will best answer his wise designs. However, as he does not *desire*, much less *design*, that any of his soldiers should be shot for desertion, he does what his wisdom permits him to do to prevent their going over to the enemy ; and yet, for the above-mentioned reason, he does not *absolutely hinder* them from doing it. Now, in such a case, who does not see that the difference between *not absolutely hindering* and *designing*, is as discernible as the difference between *reason* and *folly* ;—or between *wisdom* and *wickedness* ? By such dangerous insinuations as that, which this illustration exposes, the simple are imperceptibly led to confound *Christ* and *Belial* ; and to think, that there is *little difference* between the celestial Parent of *good*, and the Manichean Parent of *good* and *evil* ;—the *Janus* of the fatalists, who wears two faces, an angel's face, and a devil's face ; a mongrel, imaginary god this, whose fancied ways are, like his fancied nature, full of *duplicity*.

3. To the preceding illustration I beg leave to add the following argument. No unprejudiced person will, I hope, refuse his assent to the truth of this proposition. A world, wherein there are *rational free agents*, like angels and men ;—*irrational free agents*, like dogs and horses ;—*necessary agents*, like plants and trees ; and *dead matter*, like stones and clods of earth :—Such a world, I say, is as much superior in perfection to a world, where there are only *necessary agents* and *dead matter*, as a place inhabited by *learned men* and *curious beasts*, contains more wonders than one which is only stocked with *fine flowers* and *curious stones*. If this be granted, it necessarily follows, that *this world* was very perfect, calculated to display his *infinite power* and *manifold wisdom*.—Now, in the very nature of things, *rational free agents*, being capable of knowing their Creator, owe to him gratitude and obedience ; and to one another, assistance and love ; and therefore they are *under a law*, which [*as free agents*] they may *keep or break*, as they please.

“ But, *could not God necessitate free agents to keep the law they are under ?* ”

Yes, says Calvinism, for he is endued with *infinite power* : but Scripture, good sense, and matter of fact, say No : because, although God is endued with *infinite power*, he is also endued with *infinite wisdom*. And it would be as absurd to *create free agents* in order to *necessitate* them, as to *do a thing* in order to *undo* it. Besides [I repeat it] God's *distributive justice* could never be displayed, nor could *free obedience* be paid by rationals, and crowned by the *Rewarder* and *Judge of all the earth*, unless rationals were *free-willing* creatures, and therefore, the moment you absolutely *necessitate* them, you destroy them *as free agents*, and you rob God of two of his most glorious titles—that of *Rewarder*, and that of *Judge*. Thus we account for the origin of evil in a scriptural and rational manner, without the help of Fatalism, Manicheism, or Calvinism. Mr. Toplady replies :

ARG. XXXI. [pp. 44, 45.] “ Oh, but—God himself is a *free agent*, though his will is *necessarily, unchangeably, and singly* determined to good, and to good only. So are the elect angels. So are the glorified souls of saints departed, &c. and so might Adam have been, had God pleased to have so created him.”

This is the grand objection of President Edwards, which I have answered in the *Scripture Scales*, Vol. III. p. 231, &c. I shall, however, make here a few remarks upon it.—1. If “ *God worketh all things, &c. even wickedness in the wicked;*” as the consistent Predestinarians directly or indirectly tell us ; it is absurd in them to plead, that he is *singly* determined to good, and to good only : for every body knows

that the god of Manes is full of *duplicity*; having an *evil* principle, which *absolutely predestinates* and *causes* all the *wickedness*; and a *good* principle, which *absolutely predestinates* and *causes* all the *virtue* in the world. As for the God of Christians, he is not so *necessitated* to do that which is good, but he might, *if he would*, do the most astonishing act of injustice and barbarity: for he might, *if he would*, absolutely doom myriads of unborn infants to *remediless wickedness* and *everlasting fire*, before they have deserved this dreadful doom, so much as by the awkward motion of their little finger. Nor need I tell Mr. *Toplady* this, who believes that God has actually done so.

2. God is not in a state of *probation* under a superior Being, who calls himself the *Rewarder*, and who says, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay*: nor shall he ever be tried by one who will judicially render to him according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

3. If faithful angels are *unchangeably fixed* in virtue, and unfaithful angels in vice, the *fixedness* of their nature is the consequence of the good or bad use which they have made of their liberty; and therefore their confirmation in good, or in evil, flows from a *judicial election* or *reprobation*, which displays the *distributive justice* of their Judge, Rewarder, and Avenger.

4. Nothing can be more absurd than to couple *Absolute Necessity* with *Moral Free Agency*. Angels and glorified souls are *necessitated* to serve God and love one another, as a good man is *necessitated* not to murder the king, and not to blow his own brains out. Such a *necessity* is far from being *absolute*: for, if a good man would, he might gradually overcome his reluctance to the greatest crimes. Thus David, who was, no doubt, as chaste and loving once as Joseph, overcame his strong aversion to *adultery* and *murder*.

Should it be said, What! Can glorified saints and angels fall away? I reply: they *will* never fall away, because they are called off the stage of *probation*, stand far above the reach of temptation, and have henceforth crowns of righteousness laid up for them, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give them at that day. In the mean time, they rest from their [probatory] labours, and their works follow them. But still, in the nature of things, they are as able to disobey, as Joseph was to commit adultery, had he set his heart upon it: for, if they had no capacity of disobeying, they would have no capacity of obeying, in the moral sense of the word: their obedience would be as *necessary*, and as far from *morality*, as the passive obedience of a leaden ball, which you drop, with an absurd command to tend towards the centre. If I am not mistaken, these answers fully set aside Mr. T.'s argument taken from the *necessary goodness* of God, angels, and glorified saints.

ARG. XXXII. [page 45.] “God *is*, and *cannot but be*, inviolably *just*, amidst all the sufferings of fallen angels and fallen men, involuntary beings as they are. And he will continue to be *just* in all they are yet to suffer.”—That God *is*, and *will be just*, in all that fallen angels and men have suffered, and may yet suffer, is most true, because they are *voluntary beings* [Mr. Toplady says, “*involuntary beings*”] and *free agents* [Mr. Toplady would say *necessary agents*] who *personally* deserve what they suffer : or who, if they suffer without *personal* offence, as infants do, have in Christ a rich cordial, and an efficacious remedy, which will cause their *temporary* sufferings to answer to *all eternity* the most admirable ends for themselves, if they do not reject God’s gracious, castigatory, probatory, or purificatory counsels towards them, when they come to *act as free agents*. But that God *is* and *will be just*, in absolutely ordaining “*involuntary beings*” to sin and be damned, is what has not yet been proved by one argument which can bear the light. However, Mr. Toplady, with the confidence which suits his peculiar logic, concludes this part of his subject by the following triumphal exclamation ;

ARG. XXXIII. [*Ibid.*] “And if so, what becomes of the objection to God’s decree of *Preterition*” [a soft word for *absolute reprobation to remediless sin and eternal death*,] “drawn from the article of *injustice* ?”

Why, it stands in full force, notwithstanding all the arguments which have yet been produced. Nay, the way to show that an objection is *unanswerable*, is to answer it as Mr. Toplady has done ; that is, by producing arguments which equally shock reason and conscience, and which are crowned with this new paradox : “*Fallen angels, and fallen men, are involuntary beings.*” So that the last subterfuge of moderate Calvinists is *now* given up. For when they try to vindicate God’s *justice*, with respect to the damnation of their imaginary reprobates, they say, that the poor creatures are damned as *voluntary agents*. But Mr. Toplady informs us that they are damned as “*involuntary beings*,” that is, as *excusable beings* : and might I not add, as *sinless beings* ? For (evangelically speaking) is it possible that an *involuntary being* should be *sinful* ? Why is the murderer’s sword *sinless* ? Why is the candle, by which an incendiary fires your house, an *innocent flame* ? Is it not because they are *involuntary beings*, or mere tools used by other beings ? A cart accidentally falls upon you, and you *involuntarily* fall upon a child who is killed upon the spot. The father of the child wants you hanged as a *murderer* : but the judge pronounces you perfectly guiltless. Why ? Truly, because you was in *that case* an *involuntary being*” as well as the cart. When

therefore Mr. Toplady asserts that we are *involuntary beings*, and insinuates that God is just in absolutely predestinating us to *sin necessarily*, and to be damned *eternally*, he proves *absurdum per absurdius—injustum per injustius—crudele per crudelius*. In a word, he gives a finishing stroke to God's justice; and his pretended "*vindication*" of that tremendous attribute proves, if I may use his own expression, a public, though I am persuaded, an undesigned "*defamation*" of it.

SECTION V.

An Answer to the arguments, by which Mr. Toplady endeavours to reconcile Calvinian REPROBATION with divine MERCY.

IF it is impossible to reconcile Calvinian reprobation with divine justice, how much more with divine mercy! This is however the difficult task which Mr. T. sets about next. Consider we his arguments.

ARG. XXXIV. [page 45.] "As God's forbearing to *create* more worlds than he has, is no impeachment of his *omnipotence*; so his forbearing to *save* as many as he might, is no impeachment of his infinite mercy."—The capital flaw of this argument consists in substituting still the phrase "*not saving*," for the phrase *absolutely reprobating to remediless sin and everlasting burnings*. The difference between these phrases which Mr. Toplady uses as equivalent is prodigious. Nobody ever supposed that God is *unmerciful* because he does not take stones into heaven, or because he *does not save* every pebble from its opacity, by making it transparent and glorious as a diamond: for pebbles suffer nothing by being *passed by*, and *not saved* into adamantine glory. But, if God made every pebble an organized, living body, capable of the keenest sensations; and if he appointed that most of these "*involuntary [sensible] beings*," should be absolutely opaque, and should be cast into a lime-kiln, there to endure everlasting burnings, for not having the transparency which he decreed they never should have; would it not be impossible to reconcile his conduct to the lowest idea we can form even of Bonner's *mercy*?

Having thus pointed out the sandy foundation of Mr. Toplady's argument, I shall expose its absurdity by a similar way of arguing. I am to prove that the king may, without impeachment of his mercy, put the greatest part of his soldiers in such trying circumstances as shall *necessitate* them to desert, and be shot for desertion. To do this

I learn logic of Mr. T. and say, "As the king's forbearing to *create* more lords than he has is no impeachment of his unlimited right of peerage; so his forbearing to raise as many soldiers as he might is no impeachment of his great *mercy*." So far the argument is conclusive. But if by *not raising* soldiers, I *artfully* mean *absolutely appointing and necessitating them to desert and be shot*, I vindicate the king's mercy as logically as Mr. T. vindicates the *mercy* of *Manes's* god.

ARG. XXXV. [page 46.] "If therefore the decree of" [*Calvinian*] "*reprobation* be exploded, on account of its imaginary incompatibility with divine *mercy*, we must, upon the same principle, charge God with want of goodness in almost every part of his relative conduct." If this *dark* argument be brought to the *light*, it will read thus: "God is *infinitely good* in himself, though he *limits* the exercise of his goodness in not forming so many beings as he *might*, and in not making them all so glorious as he *could*: and therefore he is *infinitely merciful*, though he *absolutely appoints* millions of unborn creatures to remediless sin and everlasting fire." But what has the *conclusion* to do with the *premiss*? What would Mr. T. think of me, if I presented the public with the following sophism? "Nobody can reasonably charge the king with want of *goodness*, for not enriching and ennobling every body: and therefore nobody can reasonably charge him with want of *mercy* for decreeing, that so many of his new-born subjects shall *necessarily* be trained up in absolute rebellion, that he may legally throw them into a fiery furnace for *necessarily* fulfilling his *absolute* decree concerning their rebellion." Nevertheless, this absurd argument contains just as much truth and mercy as that of Mr. Toplady.

ARG. XXXVI. [*Ibid.*] "There is no way of solidly, &c. justifying the ways of God with men, but upon this grand *Datum*, That the exercise of his own infinite mercy is regulated by the *voluntary* determination of his own most wise and sovereign pleasure. Allow but this rational, scriptural, &c. proposition, and every cavil, grounded on the chimerical unmercifulness of non-election, ceases even to be plausible."—The defect of this argument consists also in covering the *left leg* of Calvinism, and in supposing, that Calvinian *non-election* is a bare *non-exertion* of a *peculiar mercy* displayed towards some; whereas it is a positive act of barbarity. We readily grant that God is *infinitely merciful*, though his infinite wisdom, truth, and justice, do not suffer him to show the same mercy to *all* which he does to *some*. But it is absurd to suppose, that, because he is not bound to *show mercy* to all those who have *personally* and *unnecessarily* offended him,

[or indeed to any one of them,] he may show *injustice and cruelty* to unborn creatures, who never *personally* offended him so much as by one wandering thought, and he may *absolutely* doom myriads of them to *sin without remedy*, and to be *damned without fail*.

ARG. XXXVII. [page 48.] After all his pleas, to show that God can, without impeachment of his *Holiness, Justness, and Mercy*, absolutely appoint his unborn creatures to remediless wickedness and everlasting torments; Mr. Toplady relents, and seems a little ashamed of Calvinian reprobation. He tells us, that "*Reprobation is, for the most part, something purely negative,*" and "*has, so far as God is concerned, more in it of negation than positivity.*" But Mr. Toplady knows that the unavoidable end of absolute reprobation is *damnation*, and that the means conducive to this fearful end, is unavoidable *wickedness*; and he has already told us, p. 17. that "*God's own decree secures the means as well as the ends, and accomplishes the end by the means.*" Now securing and accomplishing a thing, is something altogether positive. Hence it is, that, p. 83. Mr. T. calls the decrees by which the reprobates sin, not only *permissive*, but "*effective*;" and tells us, p. 77. that "*God efficaciously permitted*" horrible wickedness. And herein he exactly follows Calvin, who, in his Comment on Rom. ix. 18. says, "*Indurandi verbum, quum Deo in Scripturis tribuitur non solum permissionem, (ut volunt diluti quidam moderatores) sed divinæ quoque iræ actionem significat.*"—"The word harden, when it is attributed to God in Scripture, means not only permission, [as some washy, compromising divines would have it] but it signifies also the action of divine wrath."

Besides, something *negative* amounts, in a thousand cases, to something *positive*. A general, for example, denies gunpowder to some of his soldiers, to whom he owes a grudge; he hangs them for *not firing*, and then exculpates himself by saying, "My not giving them powder was '*a thing purely negative.*' I did nothing to them to hinder them from firing: on the contrary, I bade them fire away." This is exactly the case with the Manichean god and his imaginary reprobates. He bids them repent or perish—believe or be damned—do good works or depart into everlasting fire. And yet, all the while, he keeps from them every dram of true grace, whereby they might savingly repent, believe, and obey. Is it not surprising that so many of our Gospel ministers should call preaching such a doctrine *preaching the Gospel*, and *exalting Christ*!—But Mr. Toplady replies:

ARG. XXXVIII. [page 48.] "If I am acquainted with an indigent neighbour, and have it in my power to enrich him, but do it not; am

I the author of that man's poverty, only for resolving to permit him, and for actually permitting * him, to *continue* poor? Am I blameable for his poverty, because I do not give him the utmost I am able? Similar is the case now in debate. Ever since the fall of Adam mankind are by nature spiritually poor."

Mr. T. is greatly mistaken when he says, "*Similar is the case now in debate.*" To show that it is entirely *dissimilar*, we need only make his partial illustration stand fairly "*upon its legs.*" If you know that your neighbour, who is an industrious tenant of yours, must work or break; and if, in order to make him *break*, according to your decree of *the end*, you make a decree of *the means*—an *efficacious* decree, that his cattle shall die, that his plough shall be stolen, that he shall

* Not unlike this argument is that of the Letter-writer, on whom I have already bestowed a note, Sect. II.

"Divine Justice [says he, pp. 4, 5.] could not condemn till the law was broken."—True; but Calvinian free wrath *reprobated* from all eternity, and consequently before the law was either broken or given.—"Therefore condemnation did not take place before a law was given and broken."—This author trifles; for, if Calvinian reprobation took place before the creation of Adam, and if it *necessarily* draws after it the uninterrupted breach of the law, and the condemnation consequent upon that breach, Calvinian reprobation differs no more from everlasting damnation, than *condemning* and *necessitating* a man to commit murder, that he may *infallibly* be hanged, differs from *condemning* him to be hanged.—But, "suppose that out of twenty found guilty, his Majesty King George should pardon ten, he is not the cause of the other ten being executed. It was his clemency that pardoned any: it was their breaking the laws of the kingdom that condemned them, and not his majesty."—Indeed it was his majesty who condemned them, if in order to do it without fail, he made, 1. Efficacious and irresistible decrees of the *means*, that they should necessarily and unavoidably be guilty of robbery; and 2. Efficacious and irresistible decrees of the *end*, that they should unavoidably be condemned for their *crimes*, and inevitable *guilt*. The chain by which the god of Manes and Calvin drags poor reprobates to hell, has three capital links: the first is *absolute, unconditional reprobation*; the second is *necessary, remediless sin*; and the third is *ensured, eternal damnation*. Now although the *middle* link intervenes between the *first* and the *last* link, it is only a necessary connexion between them; for, says Mr. Toplady, (p. 17.) "God's own decree *secures the means* as well as the *end*, and *accomplishes the end by the means*. That is, (when this doctrine is applied to the present case) the first link, which is *Calvinian Reprobation*, draws the middle, diabolical link, which is *Remediless Wickedness*, as well as the last link, which is *Infernal and finished Damnation*. Thus Calvin's god "*accomplishes*" damnation by means of *sin*; or, if you please, he draws the *third* link by means of the *second*. Who can consider this and not wonder at the prejudice of the Letter-writer, who boldly affirms, that, upon the Calvinian scheme, God is no more the author and cause of the damnation of the reprobates, than the king is the cause of the condemnation of the criminals whom he does not pardon! For my part, the more I consider Calvinism, the more I see that the decree of Absolute Reprobation, which is inseparable from the decree of Absolute Election, represents God as the *sure author* of *sin*, in order to represent him as the *sure author* of *damnation*. The horrible mystery of *Absolute Reprobation*, *Necessary Sin*, and *Ensured Damnation*, is not less essential to Calvinism, than the glorious mystery of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* is essential to Christianity; and yet Calvinism is "*the Gospel!—the Doctrines of Grace!*"

fall sick, and that nobody shall help him; I boldly say, You are "*the author of that man's poverty.*"—And if, when you have reduced him to sordid want, and have by this means clothed his numerous family with *filthy rags*, you make another *efficacious, absolute* decree, that a majority of his children shall never have a good garment, and that at whatsoever time the constable shall find them with the only ragged coat which their bankrupt father could afford to give them, they shall all be sent to the house of correction, and severely whipt there, merely for not having on a certain coat, which you took care they should never have; and for wearing the *filthy rags*, which you decreed they should *necessarily* wear, you show yourself as *merciless* to the poor man's children, as you showed yourself *ill-natured* to the poor man himself. To prove that *this* is a just state of the case, if the doctrine of absolute predestination be true, I refer the reader to Section II. where he will find Calvinism *on its legs*.

Upon the whole, if I mistake not, it is evident that the arguments by which Mr. Toplady endeavours to reconcile Calvinian reprobation with divine *mercy*, are as inconclusive as those by which he tries to reconcile it with divine *justice*; both sorts of arguments drawing all their plausibility from the skill with which *Logica Genevensis* tucks up the *left leg* of Calvinism, or covers it with deceitful buskins, which are called by a variety of delusive names, such as *passing by, not electing, not owing salvation, limiting the display of goodness, not extending mercy infinitely, not enriching, &c.* just as if all these phrases together conveyed one just idea of Calvinian reprobation, which is an *absolute, unconditional dooming* of myriads of unborn creatures to live and die in *necessary remediless wickedness*, and then to *depart into everlasting fire*, merely because Adam, according to divine predestination, necessarily sinned; obediently fulfilling God's absolute, irreversible, and efficacious *decree of the means* [*sin.*] An Antinomian decree this, by which, if Calvinism be true, God *secured and accomplished the decree of the end*, that is, the *remediless sin and eternal damnation of the reprobate*: for, says Mr. T. [p. 17.] "*God's own decree secures the means as well as the end, and accomplishes the end by the means.*"

And now, candid Reader, say if Mr. T. did not act with a degree of partiality, when he called his book *A Vindication of God's Decrees, &c. from the defamations of Mr. Wesley*;—and if he could not, with greater propriety, have called it, *An unscriptural and illogical Vindication of the horrible Decree, from the scriptural and rational exceptions made against it by Mr. Wesley.*

SECTION VI.

A View of the SCRIPTURE PROOFS by which Mr. T. attempts to demonstrate the Truth of Calvinian Reprobation.

THAT the Old and New Testaments hold forth a *partial reprobation of distinguishing grace*, and an *impartial reprobation of retributive justice*, is a capital truth of the Gospel. One of the leading errors of the Calvinists consists in confounding these two reprobations, and the elections which they draw after them. By the impetuous blast of prejudice, and the fire of a heated imagination, modern Aarons melt the *partial election of grace*, and the *impartial election of justice*; and, casting them in the mould of *confusion*, they make their *one partial election of unscriptural, necessitating, Antinomian free grace*, to which they are obliged to oppose their *one partial reprobation of necessitating Manichean free wrath*. Now, as the Scriptures frequently speak of the *harmless reprobation of grace*, and of the *awful reprobation of justice*, it would be surprising indeed, if, out of so large a book as the Bible, *Logica Genevensis* could not extract a few passages, which, by being wrested from the context, and misapplied according to art, seem to favour Calvinian reprobation. Such passages are produced in the following pages.

ARG. XXXIX. [page 49.] After transcribing Rom. ix. 20—23. Mr. Toplady says, “Now are these the words of Scripture, or are they not? If not, prove the forgery. If they be, you cannot fight against *reprobation* without fighting against God.”—Far from fighting against *Scripture reprobation*, we maintain, as St. Paul does in Rom. ix.—1. That God has an absolute right *gratuitously* to call whom he pleases to either of his two grand covenants of peculiarity [*Judaism and Christianity*]; and *gratuitously* to *reprobate* whom he will from the blessings peculiar to these covenants; leaving as many nations and individuals as he thinks fit, under the general blessings of the gracious covenants, which he made with reprieved Adam, and with spared Noah.—2. We assert that God has an indubitable right *judicially* to *reprobate* obstinate unbelievers under all the dispensations of his grace, and to appoint, that [as stubborn unbelievers] they shall be *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction* by their own unbelief, and not by God’s free wrath. This is all the reprobation which St. Paul contends for in Rom. ix. [See *Scales*, Vol. iii. Sect. xi.] where Mr. T.’s objection is answered at large. Therefore, with one hand we defend

Scripture reprobation ; and with the other, we attack *Calvinian reprobation* : maintaining that the *Scripture reprobation* of grace, and of justice, are as different from Calvinian, damning reprobation, as appointing a soldier to continue ■ soldier, and to be a captain, or a wilful deserter to be shot, is different from appointing a soldier necessarily to desert, that he may be unavoidably shot for desertion.

Having thus vindicated the *godly* reprobation maintained by St. Paul, from the misapprehensions of Mr. Toplady, we point at all the passages which we have produced in the *Scripture Scales*, in defence of the *doctrines of justice*, the *conditionality* of the *reward of the inheritance*, and the *freedom* of the will. And, retorting Mr. T.'s argument, we say, "Now, are these the words of Scripture, or are they not? If not, prove the forgery. If they be, you cannot fight against [the *conditional*] reprobation [which we defend] without fighting against God."—You cannot fight for Calvinian reprobation, without fighting for free wrath and the *evil* principled deity worshipped by the Manichees.

ARG. XL. [page 51.] Mr. T. supports *absolute reprobation* by quoting 1 Sam. ii. 25. "*They* [the sons of Eli] *hearkened not to the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them*, 1 Sam. ii. 25."—Here we are given to understand, that, by the decree of the means, the Lord secured the disobedience of these wicked men, in order to accomplish his decree of the end, that is, their absolute destruction.

To this truly Calvinian insinuation we answer, 1. The sons of Eli, who had turned the tabernacle into a house of ill fame, and a den of thieves, had *personally* deserved a *judicial* reprobation ; God therefore could *justly* give them up to ■ reprobate mind, in consequence of their personal, avoidable, repeated, and aggravated crimes. 2. The word *killing* does not here necessarily imply eternal damnation. The Lord *killed*, by ■ lion, the man of God from Judah, for having stopped in Bethel :—he *killed* Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire :—he *killed* the child of David and Bathsheba :—he *killed* many of the Corinthians for their irreverent partaking of the Lord's supper :—but the *sin unto* [bodily] DEATH is not the *sin unto eternal* death : for St. Paul informs us, that the body is sometimes *given up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*. 1 Cor. v. 5.—3. The Hebrew particle ׀, which is rendered in our translation *because*, means also *therefore* : and so our translators themselves have rendered it after St. Paul, and the Septuagint, Ps. cxvi. 10. *I believed ׀ and therefore will I speak* : see

2 Cor. iv. 13. If they had done their part as well in translating the verse quoted by Mr. Toplady, the doctrines of *free wrath* would have gone propless; and we should have had these edifying words: *they [the sons of Eli] hearkened not to the voice of their father; and therefore the Lord would slay them.* Thus the *voluntary sin* of free agents would be represented as the cause of their *deserved reprobation*; and not their *undeserved reprobation* as the cause of their *necessary sin*. See Sect. II.

ARG. XLI. [page 51.] Mr. T. tries to prove absolute reprobation by quoting these words of our Lord, "*Thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would [or might] have remained unto this day.*"

This passage, if I am not mistaken, is nothing but a strong *expostulation* and *reproof*, admirably calculated to shame the unbelief, and alarm the fears of the *Capernaïtes*. Suppose I had an enemy, whose obstinate hatred had resisted for years the constant tokens of my love; and suppose I said to him, "Your obduracy is astonishing: if I had shown to the fiercest tiger the kindness which I have shown you, I could have melted the savage beast into love;" would it be right, from such a *figurative supposition*, to conclude that I *absolutely* believed I could have tamed the fiercest tiger?

But this passage, taken in a literal sense, far from proving the absolute reprobation of *Sodom*, demonstrates that *Sodom* was never reprobated in the Calvinian sense of the word: for if it had been *absolutely* reprobated from all eternity, no works done in her by Christ and his apostles, could have overcome her unbelief: but our Lord observes, that her strong unbelief could have been overcome by the extraordinary means of faith, which could not conquer the unbelief of *Capernaum*. Mr. T. goes on.

ARG. XLII. [*Ibid.*] "But though God knew the citizens of *Sodom* would [or might] have reformed their conduct, had his providence made use of *effectual* [Mr. T. should say, of *every effectual*] means to that end; still these *effectual* [Mr. T. should say, *all these extraordinary and peculiar*] means were not vouchsafed."—True: because, according to the election of grace, God uses *more* means and *more powerful* means to convert some cities, than he does to convert others: witness the case of *Nineveh*, compared with that of *Jericho*. This is strongly maintained in my *Essay on the partial reprobation of distinguishing grace*, where this very passage is produced. But still we affirm two things:—1. God always uses means sufficient to demonstrate, that his goodness, patience, and mercy are over all his

works [though in different degrees ;] and to testify that he is unwilling that sinners should die ; unless they have first obstinately, and without necessity, refused to *work out their own eternal salvation* with the talent of *temporary salvation*, which is given to all, for the sake of him whose *saving grace has appeared to all men*, and who *enlightens* [in various degrees] *every man that comes into the world*. 2. As the men of Sodom were not *absolutely lost*, though they had but *one* talent of means, no more were the men of Capernaum *absolutely saved*, though God favoured them with so many *more* talents of means than he did the men of Sodom. Hence it appears that Mr. T. has run upon the point of his own sword ; the passage which he appeals to, proving, that God does not work so *irresistibly* upon either Jews or Gentiles, as to secure his *absolute approbation* of some, and his *absolute reprobation* of others.

ARG. XLIII. [page 52.] Mr. T., to prop up Calvinian reprobation, quotes these words of Christ, "*Fill ye up the measure of your fathers*," Matt. xxiii. 32 ; and he takes care to produce the words, *Fill ye up*, in capitals ; as if he would give us to understand, that Christ is extremely busy in getting reprobates to *sin* and *be damned*. For my part, as I believe that Christ never preached up *sin* and *wickedness*, I am persuaded that this expression is nothing but a strong, *ironical reproof* of sin, like that in the Revelation, *Let him that is unjust be unjust still* ;—or that in the Gospel, *Sleep on now, and take your rest* :—or that in the Book of Ecclesiastes, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, &c. but know, &c.* I shudder when I consider "*Doctrines of grace*," so called, which support themselves by representing Christ as a preacher of wickedness. Calvinism may be compared to that insect which feeds on putrifying carcasses, lights only upon *real* or *apparent* sores, and delights chiefly in the smell of *corruption*. If there be a fault in our translation, Calvinism will pass over a hundred plain passages well translated, and will eagerly light upon the error. Thus p. 53 and 57. Mr. Toplady quotes, *Being disobedient, whereunto they are appointed*, 1 Pet. ii. 8. He had rather take it for granted, that the god of Manes *absolutely predestinates* some people *to be disobedient*, than to do the holy God the justice to admit this godly sense, which the original bears, *Being disobedient, whereunto they have set, or disposed themselves*. See the proofs, *Scales*, Vol. iii. p. 440. and Vol. iv. p. 32.

ARG. XLIV. [page 52.] Mr. T. still pleading for the horrible decree of Calvinian reprobation, says, "St. Matthew, if possible, expresses it still more strongly : *It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ; but to them it is not given*, Matt. xiii. 11."—I

answer, 1. If by the *mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, you understand the *mysteries of Christianity*, it is absurd to say, that all who are not blessed with the knowledge of these mysteries, are Calvinistically reprobated. This I demonstrate by verses 16, 17. and by the parallel place in St. Luke : *all things are delivered to me of my Father : and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father : and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* [That is, the mystery of a relative personality of *Father and Son* in the Godhead, has not been expressly revealed to others, as I choose to reveal it to you, my *Christian* friends :] and [to show that this was his meaning] he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, *Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see : for I tell you that many prophets [such as Samuel, Isaiah, Daniel, &c.] and kings [such as David, Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah, &c. St. Matthew adds, and righteous men, such as Noah, Abraham, &c.] have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them ; and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* Luke x. 22, 23, 25. Matt. xiii. 17.—Is not Mr. T. excessively fond of reprobating people to death, if he supposes, that because it was not given to those prophets, kings, and righteous men, to know the *mysteries of the Christian dispensation*, they were all absolutely doomed to continue in sin, and be damned ?

But 2. Should it be asserted, that by the *mysteries of the kingdom* we are to understand here every degree of saving light, then the reprobation mentioned in Matt. xiii. 11. is not the *partial* reprobation of *grace*, but the *impartial* reprobation of *justice* ; and in this case, to appeal to this verse in support of a chimerical reprobation of *free wrath*, argues great inattention to the context ; for the *very next* verse fixes the reason of the reprobation of the Jews, who heard the Gospel of Christ without being benefited by it ;—a reason this which saps the foundation of *absolute* reprobation. *But unto them it is not given :—for they are Calvinistically reprobated !—No.—Unto them it is not given : for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance : but whosoever hath not [to purpose] from him shall be taken away, even that he hath,* Matt. xiii. 12. This anti-Calvinian sense is strongly confirmed by our Lord's words two verses below : *to them it is not given, &c. for this people's heart is waxed gross : [note : it is waxed gross, therefore it was not so gross at first as it is now :] and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* Matt. xiii. 15.—To produce therefore Matt. xiii. 11. as a capital proof of Calvinian reprobation, is as daring an imposition upon

the credulity of the simple, as to produce Exodus xx. in defence of adultery and murder. However, such arguments will not only be swallowed down in Geneva as tolerable, but the author of P. O. will cry them up as "*most masterly.*"

ARG. XLV. [page 53.] Mr. T. concludes his Scripture proofs of Calvinian reprobation by these words: "Now I leave it to the decision of any unprejudiced, capable man upon earth, whether it be not evident from these passages, &c. that *God hath determined to leave some men to perish in their sins, and to be justly punished for them?* In affirming which I only give the Scripture as I found it."—That the scriptures produced by Mr. T. prove this, is true; we maintain it as well as he; and if he will impose no other reprobation upon us, we are ready to shake hands with him. Nor need he call his book, "*More Work for Mr. Wesley,*" but, *A Reconciliation with Mr. Wesley*: for, when we speak of the reprobation of justice, we assert that "*God hath determined to leave some men.*" [namely, the wise and prudent in their own eyes, the proud and disobedient, who do despite to the Spirit of grace to the end of their day of salvation] "*to perish in their sins, and to be justly punished for them.*" But, according to Mr. T.'s system, the men *left to perish in their sins*, are not the men whom the scriptures which he has quoted describe; but poor creatures absolutely sentenced to *necessary, remediless sin*, and to *unavoidable, eternal damnation*, long before they had an existence in their mothers' womb. And, in this case, we affirm that their endless torments can never be *just*; and of consequence, that the *Calvinian reprobation* of unborn men, which Mr. T. has tried to dress up in Scripture phrases, is as contrary to the Scripture reprobation of stubborn offenders, as Herod's ordering the *barbarous destruction* of the *Holy Innocents* is different from his ordering the *righteous execution* of *bloody murderers*.

SECTION VII.

An Answer to the Arguments by which Mr. T. tries to reconcile Calvinism with the doctrine of a future judgment, and ABSOLUTE Necessity with MORAL Agency.

THEY who indirectly set aside the day of judgment, do the cause of religion as much mischief, as they who indirectly set aside the immortality of the soul. Mr. Wesley asserts, that the Calvinists are the men. His words are, "On the principle of absolute predestination, there can be no future judgment.—It requires more pains than

all the men upon earth, and all the devils in hell will ever be able to take, to reconcile the doctrine of [Calvinian] reprobation, with the doctrine of a *judgment-day*.”—Mr. T. answers :

ARG. XLVI. [page 82.] “ The consequence is false ; for absolute predestination is the very thing that renders the future judgment certain : *God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained.*”—If Mr. T. had put the words *in righteousness* in capitals, instead of the words *appointed* and *ordained* [which, he fondly hopes, will convey the idea of the Calvinian decrees] he would have touched the knot of the difficulty : for the question is not, Whether there *will be* a day of judgment ; but, Whether, on the principle of absolute predestination, there *can be* a day of judgment, consistently with divine equity, justice, wisdom, and sincerity : and that there *can*, Mr. T. attempts by prove to the following reasoning.

ARG. XLVII. [page 83.] “ The most flagrant sinners sin *voluntarily*, notwithstanding the inevitable accomplishment of God’s effective and permissive decrees. Now they, who sin *voluntarily*, are *accountable* ; and accountable sinners are *judicable* ; and if judicable, they are *punishable*.”

Mr. T. has told us [p. 45.] that “ *fallen men are involuntary beings* ; and in this page he tells us, that they sin *voluntarily*. Now we, who never learned Mr. T.’s logic, cannot understand how *involuntary beings* can sin *voluntarily*. But, letting this contradiction pass, and granting that sinners offend *voluntarily*, I ask, Is their *will* at liberty to choose otherwise than it does, or is it not ? If you say, it is at liberty to choose otherwise than it does, you renounce *Necessitating* predestination, and you will allow the doctrine of *free will*, which is the bulwark of the second Gospel axiom, and the Scripture engine which batters down Calvinian reprobation ; and, upon this scriptural plan, it is most certain that God *can judge the world in righteousness*, that is, in a manner which reflects praise upon his essential *justice* and *wisdom*. But if you insinuate that the will of sinners is absolutely bound by “ *the efficacious purposes of heaven,*” and by the “ *effective decrees*” of him who “ *worketh all things in all men, and even wickedness in the wicked ;*”—if you say, that God’s decree concerning every man is *irreversible*, whether it be a decree of absolute election to life, or of absolute reprobation to death, “ *Because God’s own decree secures the means as well as the end, and accomplishes the end by the means,*” p. 17. ;—or, which comes to the same thing, if you assert, that the reprobate always sin *necessarily*, having no power, no liberty to *will* righteousness ; you answer like a consistent Calvinist,

and pour your shame, folly, and unrighteousness upon the tribunal, where Christ will judge the world in righteousness.

A just illustration will convince the unprejudiced reader, that this is really the case.—By the king's "*efficacious permission*," a certain strong man, called *Adam*, binds the hands of a thousand children behind their backs with a chain of brass, and a strong lock, of which the king himself keeps the key. When the children are thus chained, the king commands them all, *upon pain of death*, to put their hands upon their breasts, and promises ample rewards to those who will do it. Now, as the king is absolute, he *passes by* 700 of the bound children, and as he *passes them by*, he hangs about their necks a *black stone*, with this inscription, "*Unconditional reprobation to death*:" but being merciful too, he graciously fixes his love upon the rest of the children, just 300 in number, and he ordains them to finished salvation by hanging about their necks a *white stone*, with this inscription, "*Unconditional election to life*." And, that they may not miss their reward by non-performance of the above-mentioned condition, he gives the key of the locks to another strong man, named *Christ*, who, in a day of irresistible power, looses the hands of the 300 elect children, and chains them upon their breasts, as strongly as they were before chained behind their backs. When all the elect are properly bound, agreeably to orders, the king proceeds to judge the children according to their works, that is, according to their having put their hands *behind their backs*, or *upon their breasts*. In the mean time, a question arises in the court: Can the king judge the children concerning the position of their hands, without rendering himself ridiculous? Can he *wisely reward* the elect favourites with life according to *their* works, when he has absolutely done the rewardable work for them by the stronger man? And can he *justly punish* the reprobate with eternal death, for not putting their hands upon their breasts; when the strong man has, according to a royal decree, absolutely bound them behind their backs?—"Yes, he can; [says a counsellor, who has learned logic in mystic Geneva] for the children have *hands*, notwithstanding the *inevitable* accomplishment of the king's *effective and permissive decrees*: now, children who have hands, and do not place them as they are bid, are *accountable*, and accountable children are *judicable*: and if judicable, they are *punishable*." This argument would be excellent, if the counsellor did not speak of *hands* which are *absolutely tied*. But it is not barely the having *hands*, but the having *hands free*, which makes us accountable for not placing them properly.

Apply this plain observation to the case in hand, and you will see, 1. That it is not barely the having a *will*, but the having *free will*, which constitutes us *accountable, judicable, and punishable*:—2. That, of consequence, Mr. Toplady's grand argument is as inconclusive as that of the counsellor:—3. That both arguments are as contrary to good sense, as the state of hands *at liberty* is contrary to the state of hands *absolutely tied*:—as contrary to reason, as *free will* is contrary to a *will absolutely bound*:—And 4. That, of consequence, the doctrine of the day of judgment is as incompatible with Calvinian predestination, as sense with nonsense, and Christ with Belial.

However, if Mr. T. cannot carry his point by *Reason*, he will do it by *Scripture*; and therefore he raises such an argument as this: we often read in the Bible, that there will be a *day of judgment*: we often meet also in the Bible with the words *must* and *necessity*; and therefore, according to the Bible, the doctrine of a *day of judgment* is consistent with the doctrine of the *absolute necessity* of human actions: just as if, in a thousand cases, a *degree* of necessity, or a *must*, were not as different from *absolute necessity*, as the *want* of an apartment in the king's palace is different from the *absolute want* of a room in any house in the kingdom. The absurdity of this argument will be better understood, by considering the passages which Mr. T. produces to prove that when men do good or evil, God's *absolute* decree of predestination *necessitates* them to do it.

ARG. XLVIII. [page 60.] “*It must needs be that offences come.—There must be heresies among you.—Such things [wars, &c.] must needs be.*”—When Mr. T. builds Calvinian necessity upon these scriptures, he is as much mistaken as if he fancied that Mr. Wesley and I were *fatalists*, because we say, “Considering the course and wickedness of the world, it *cannot be but* Christendom will be distracted by heresies, law-suits, wars, and murders: for so long as men *will* follow worldly maxims, rather than evangelical precepts, such things *must come to pass.*”—Again, would not the reader think that I trifled, if I attempted to prove *absolute necessity* from such scriptural expressions as these? *Seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.—New wine must be put into new bottles.—He must needs go through Samaria.—I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it.—How can I sin against God? I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.—The multitude must needs come together [to mob Paul.] Acts xxi. 22.—A bishop must be blameless.—Ye must needs be subject, [to rulers] not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

Once more: who does not see, that there is what the poverty of language obliges me to call, 1. *A necessity of duty*: “*I must pay my*

debts :—*I must preach next Sunday.*”—2. A necessity of civility : “ *I must pay such a visit.* ”—3. A necessity of circumstance : “ *In going from Jerusalem to Galilee, I must needs pass through Samaria, because the highway lies directly through Samaria.* ”—4. A necessity of convenience : “ *I am tired with writing ; I must leave off.* ”—5. A necessity of decency : “ *I must not go naked.* ”—6. A necessity of prudence : “ *I must look before I leap,* ” &c. Now, *all* these sorts of necessity, and a hundred more of the like stamp, do not amount to one single grain of Calvinian, absolute, insuperable necessity. However, a rigid predestinarian [such is the force of prejudice !] sees his imaginary necessity in almost every *must* ; just as a jealous man sees adultery in almost every *look* which his virtuous wife casts upon the man whom he fancies to be his rival.

ARG. XLIX. [page 61.] “ Absolute necessity, then, is perfectly consistent with willingness and freedom in good agency, no less than in bad. For it is a true maxim, *Ubi voluntas, ibi libertas.* ” That is, *where there is a will, there is liberty.* This maxim, which has led many good men into Calvinism, I have already exposed ; see *Scales*, Vol. iii. p. 219. To what is there advanced, I add the following remark : As there may be *liberty* where there is not a *will*, so there may be a *will* where there is not *liberty*. The first idle schoolboy whom you meet will convince you of it. I ask him, “ When you are at school, and have a *will*, or, as you call it, a *mind* to go and play, have you *liberty*, or *freedom* to do it ? ” He answers “ No. ” Here is then a *will* without *liberty*. I ask him again, “ When you are at school, where you have *freedom* or *liberty* to ply your book, have you a *will* to do it. ” He honestly answers “ No ” again. Here is then *liberty* without a *will*. How false therefore is this proposition, that *where there is a will there is liberty* ! Did judicious Calvinists consider this, they would no more say, “ If all men were redeemed, they would all come out of the dungeon of sin. ” For there may be a *freedom* to come out consequent upon redemption, where there is no *will exercised*.—“ Oh, but God makes us willing in the day of his power. ” True : in the day of salvation he restores to us the faculty of choosing moral good with some degree of ease ; and, from time to time, he peculiarly helps us to make acts of willingness. But to suppose that he absolutely wills for us, is as absurd as to say, that when, after a quinsy, his gracious providence restores us a degree of liberty to swallow, he necessitates us to eat and drink, or actually swallows for us.

ARG. L. [page 61.] In his refusal to dismiss the Israelites, &c. “ he [Pharaoh] could will no otherwise than he did, Exod. vii. 3, 4. ”

—Is not this a mistake? When Pharaoh considered, did he not *alter* his mind? Did he not say to Moses, *Be gone, and bless me also?* If Omnipotence had *absolutely* hardened him, could he have complied at last? Do the *unchangeable* decrees *change* as the will of Pharaoh changed?

ARG. LI. [p. 61, 62.] “So when Saul went home to Gibeah, it is said, *There went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.* In like manner God is said to have *stirred up the spirit of Cyrus.*—*Then rose up, &c. the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised up.* Will any man say, that these did not will *freely*, only because they willed necessarily?”

1. I [for one] say, that while they willed *necessarily*, [in the Calvinian sense of the word *necessary*] they did not—they *could not will freely* [in the moral sense of the word *free*.] For Mr. T. is not morally *free to will* so long as he is *absolutely bound to will* one thing; any more than a man is *free to look to the left*, who is *absolutely bound to look to the right*; let the object he looks at engage his heart and eye ever so pleasingly. God’s Spirit prevents, accompanies, and follows us in every good thing: all our good works are *begun, continued, and ended in him*: but they are not *necessary*, in the Calvinian sense of the word. In *moral* cases God does not *absolutely* necessitate us, though he may do it in *prophetic* and *political* cases. Thus, he *necessitated* Balaam, when he blessed Israel by the mouth of that covetous prophet; and thus he *necessitated* Balaam’s ass, when the dumb animal reproved his rider’s madness. But then, whatever we do, under such *necessitating impulses*, will not be rewarded as our own work, any more than Balaam’s good prophecy, and his ass’s good reproof, were rewarded as *their own* works.

2. From the above-mentioned passages, Mr. T. would make us believe, that, upon the whole, the *touches* of God’s grace act *necessarily* like charms: but what says the stream of the Scriptures?—God *touched the hearts* of all the Israelites, and stirred them up to faith: but the effect of that touch was so far from being *absolutely* forcible, that their hearts soon *started aside like a broken bow*; and, after having been *saved in Egypt through faith*, they *perished in the wilderness through unbelief*. God gave king Saul a new heart; and yet Saul cast away the heavenly gift.—God gave Solomon a *wise and understanding heart*; and yet Solomon, in his old age, *made himself a foolish heart, darkened* by the love of heathenish women. God stirred up the heart of Peter to confess Christ, and to walk upon the sea; and yet, by and by, Peter sunk, cursed, swore, and denied his Lord.—Awful demonstrations these, that where divine grace works

most powerfully, when its first grand impulse is over, there is an end of the *overbearing power*; and the soul, returning to its *free agency*, chooses *without necessity* the *good* which constitutes her *rewardable*; or the *evil* which constitutes her *punishable*. Of this Mr. Toplady himself produces a remarkable instance, 2 Cor. viii. 16, 17. "*Thanks be to God [says the apostle] who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you;—of his own accord he went unto you.*"

If a gentleman, who delights to be in houses of ill-fame, more than in the house of God, sees in a circle of ladies one whom he *suspects* of being immodest, he singles her out as one that may suit his purpose: and to her he makes his bold addresses. I am sorry to observe that this is exactly the case with Calvinism unmasked. We find in the Scriptures a few places where God's suffering some men to do a lesser evil, in order to *prevent*, or to *punish* a greater evil, is expressed in a strong, figurative manner, which seems to ascribe sin to Him, just as in other places, *jealousy*, *repentance*, *wrath*, and *fury*, together with *hands*, *feet*, *ears*, and *a nose*, are *figuratively* attributed to him. Now, as *Popish Idolatry* screens herself behind these metaphors, so *Calvinian Antinomianism* perpetually singles out those metaphorical expressions, which seem to make God the author of sin. Accordingly,

ARG. LII. [page 61, &c.] Mr. T. produces these words of Joseph, "*It was not you that sent me hither, but God;*"—these words of David, "*The Lord said to him, [Shimei] curse David;*"—these words of the sacred historian, "*God had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom;*" and these words of the prophet, "*Howbeit, he [the Assyrian king, turned loose upon Israel to avenge God's righteous quarrel with that hypocritical people] meaneth not so, neither does his heart think so: but it is in his heart to destroy;*"—these words in the Revelation, "*God hath put into their hearts [the hearts of the kings who shall hate the mystic harlot, and destroy her, and burn her with fire] to fulfil his will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom to the beast, till the words of God shall be fulfilled;*"—and the words of Peter, "*They [the accomplisners of the crucifixion of Christ] were gathered together to do whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel had predestinated to be done,*" &c.

With respect to the last text, if it be rightly* translated, it is explained by these words of Peter, Acts ii. 23. *Christ was delivered*

* With *Episcopi*us, and some other learned critics, I doubt it is not. Why should it not be read thus? Acts iv. 26—28. *The rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed,*

by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God :—by his gracious counsel, that Christ should lay down his life as ■ ransom for all :—And by his clear foreknowledge of the disposition of the Jews to take that precious life away. This passage, then, and all those which Mr. T. has produced, or may yet produce, only prove,

1. That God foresees the evil which is in the hearts of the wicked, and their future steps in peculiar circumstances, with ten thousand times more clearness and certainty than a good huntsman foresees all the windings, doublings, and shifts of a hunted fox : and that he overrules their wicked counsels to the execution of his own wise and holy designs, as a good rider overrules the mad prancings of a vicious horse, to the display of his perfect skill in horsemanship, and to the treading down of the enemy in a day of battle. 2. That God catches the wise in their own craftiness, and that to punish the wicked, he permits their wicked counsels to be defeated, and their best-concerted schemes to prove abortive. 3. That he frequently tries the faith, and exercises the patience of good men, by letting loose the wicked upon them, as in the case of Job and of Christ. 4. That he often punishes the wickedness of one man by letting loose upon him the wickedness of another man ; and that he frequently avenges himself of one wicked nation by letting loose upon it the wickedness of another nation. Thus he let Absalom and Shimei loose upon David. Thus ■ parable spoken by the prophet Micajah informs us, that God, after having let a lying spirit loose upon Zedekiah the false prophet, let Zedekiah loose upon wicked Ahab. Thus the Lord let loose the Philistines upon disobedient Israel, and the Romans upon the obdurate Jews and their accursed city ; using those wicked heathen as his vindictive scourge, just as he used swarms of frogs and locusts, when he punished rebellious Egypt with his plagues.—5.

(both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together) for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.—By putting the clause *both Herod, &c.* in a parenthesis, you have this evangelical sense, which gives no handle to the pleaders for sin, *Both Herod and Pilate &c. were gathered together against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel before determined to be done.* I prefer this reading to the common one for the following reasons: 1. It is perfectly agreeable to the Greek; and the peculiar construction of the sentence is expressive of the peculiar earnestness with which the apostles prayed. 2. It is attended with no Manichean inconveniency. 3. It is more agreeable to the context. For, if the Sanhedrim was gathered by God's direction and decree, in order to threaten the apostles, with what propriety could they say [ver. 29.] *Now, Lord, behold their threatenings?*—And 4. It is strongly supported by verse 30, where Peter [after having observed verse 27, 29, according to our reading, that God had anointed his holy child Jesus to do all the miracles which he did on earth] prays, that now Christ is gone to heaven, the effects of this powerful anointing may continue, and *signs and wonders may still be done by the name of his holy child Jesus.*

That he sometimes lets a wicked man loose upon himself, as in the case of *Ahithophel*, *Nabal*, and *Judas*, who became their own executioners. 6. That when wicked men are going to commit atrocious wickedness, he sometimes inclines their hearts so to relent, that they commit a *less* crime than they intended. For instance, when Joseph's brethren were going to starve him to death, by providential circumstances God inclined their hearts to *spare his life*: thus instead of destroying him, they only sold him into Egypt. 7. With respect to Rev. xvii. 17. the context, and the full stream of the Scripture, require that it should be understood thus: "as God, by providential circumstances, which seemed to favour their worldly views, suffered wicked kings to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, to help the beast to execute God's judgments upon corrupted churches and wicked states; so he will peculiarly let those kings loose upon the whore, and they shall agree to hate her, and shall make her desolate and naked."

Upon the whole, it is contrary to all the rules of criticism, decency, and piety, to take advantage of the dark construction of a sentence, or to avail oneself of a parable, a hyperbole, a bold metaphor, or an unguarded saying of a good man interwoven with the thread of Scripture history; in order to make appear [so far as Calvinism can] that "God worketh all things in all men, even wickedness in the wicked." Such a method of wresting the oracles of God, to make them speak the language of Belial and Moloch, is as ungenerous, as our inferring from these words, *I do not condemn thee*, that Christ does not condemn adulterers; that Christianity encourages adultery; and that this single sentence, taken in a filthy, Antinomian sense, outweighs all the sermon upon the mount, as well as the holy meaning of the context: for these words being spoken to an adulteress, whom the magistrates had not condemned to die, and whom the Pharisees wanted Christ to *condemn to be stoned according to the law of Moses*; it is evident that our Lord's words, when taken in connexion with the context, carry this edifying meaning: "I am come to act the part of a *Saviour*, and not that of a *Magistrate*: if the magistrates have not *condemned thee to be stoned*, neither do I condemn thee to that dreadful kind of death: avail thyself of thy undeserved reprieve: *go, and repent*, and evidence the sincerity of thy repentance by *sinning no more*."—Hence I conclude, that all the texts quoted by the fatalists, prove that God *necessitates* men to sin by his decrees, just as John viii. 11. proves that Christ *countenances* the filthy sin of adultery.

ARG. LIII. [p. 64.] Mr. T. thinks to demonstrate that the doctrine of the *absolute necessity* of all our actions, and consequently of all our

sins, is true, by producing St. Paul's case as a preacher. "*Though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, yea, wo is me if I preach not the Gospel*, 1 Cor. ix. 16. Yet he preached the Gospel freely, &c. Necessity therefore and freedom, are very good friends, notwithstanding all the efforts of Arminianism to set them at variance."—The apostle evidently speaks here of a necessity of precept on God's part, and of duty on his own part: and such a necessity being perfectly consistent with the alternative of obedience or of disobedience, is also perfectly consistent with freedom and with a day of judgment: and Mr. T. trifles when he speaks of all the efforts of Arminianism to set such a necessity at variance with freedom; for it is the distinguishing glory of our doctrine, to maintain both the freedom of the will, and the indispensable necessity of cordial obedience. But in the name of candour and common sense I ask, What has a necessity of precept and duty to do with Calvinian necessity, which in the day of God's power absolutely necessitates the elect to obey, and the reprobate to disobey; entirely debarring the former from the alternative of disobedience, and the latter from the alternative of obedience? That the apostle, in the text before us, does not mean a Calvinian, absolute necessity, is evident from the last clause of the verse, where he mentions the possibility of his disobeying, and the punishment that awaited him in case of disobedience: *wo is me*, says he, *if I preach not the Gospel*.—A necessity of precept was laid on Jonah to preach the Gospel to the Ninevites; but this necessity was so far from Calvinistically binding him to preach, that (like Demas, and the clergy who fleece a flock which they do not feed) he ran away from his appointed work, and incurred the *wo* mentioned by the apostle. Therefore, St. Paul's words, candidly taken together, far from establishing absolute necessity, which admits of no alternative, are evidently subversive of this dangerous error, which exculpates the sinner, and makes God the author of sin.

Hence Mr. Wesley says with great truth, that if the doctrines of absolute predestination and Calvinian necessity are true, there can be no sin; seeing "It cannot be a sin in a spark to rise, or in a stone to fall." And therefore "the reprobate" [tending to evil by the irresistible power of Divine predestination, as unavoidably as stones tend to the centre, by the irresistible force of natural gravitation] "can have no sin at all."—This is a just observation, taken from the absurdity of the doctrine of an absolute necessity, originally brought on by God's absolute and irresistible decrees. Let us see how Mr. T. shows his wit on this occasion.

ARG. LIV. [pp. 71, 72.] "*The reprobate can have no sin at all. Indeed! They are quite sinless, are they? As perfect as Mr. Wesley himself? O excellent reprobation! &c. What then must the elect be? &c. Besides: if reprobates be sinless—nay, immutably perfect, so that they can have no sin at all, will it not follow that Mr. Wesley's own perfectionists are reprobates? For surely if reprobates may be sinless, the sinless may be reprobates. Did not Mr. John's malice outrun his craft, when he advanced an objection, &c. so easily retortible?*"

This *illogical*, not to say *illiberal* answer, is of a piece with the challenge, which the reader may see illustrated at the end of *Sect. I.* by my remarks upon a consequence as just as that of Mr. Wesley: for it is as evident, that if the reprobate are "*involuntary beings*,"—beings *absolutely* necessitated by *efficacious, irresistible* predestination to act as they do, they are as really *sinless* as a mountain of gold is really heavier than a handful of feathers. And Mr. Wesley may believe that both consequences are just, without believing either that *the wicked are sinless*, or that *there is a mountain of gold*. On what a slender foundation does *Logica Genevensis* rest her charges of *craft* and *malice*! And yet, this foundation is as solid as that, on which she raises her doctrines of unscriptural grace and free wrath. But Mr. T. advances other arguments.

ARG. LV. [p. 69, 70.] "The holy Baptist, without any ceremony or scruple, compared some of his unregenerate hearers to stones; saying, *God is able even of these stones to raise up children to Abraham, &c. Ye, therefore, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, &c. They (the elect) shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts—in the day when I make up my jewels: now, unless I am vehemently mistaken, jewels are but another name for precious stones.*"—Hence the reader is given to understand, that when Mr. Wesley opposes the doctrine of *absolute Necessity*, by saying, that *It cannot be a sin in a stone to fall* he turns "the Bible's own artillery against itself, and gives us too much room to fear that 'tis as natural to him to pervert—as it is for—a stone to sink."

By such arguments as these, I could prove transubstantiation: for Christ said of a bit of bread, *This is my body.*—Nay, I could prove any other absurdity: I could prove that Christ could not *think*, and that his disciples could not *walk*: for he says, *I am the vine, and ye are the branches*; and a vine can no more *think* than branches can *walk*.—I could prove that he was a *hen*, and the Jews *chickens*: for he says, that he would have gathered them, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. Nay, I could prove that Christ had no more hand in our

redemption, than we are supposed by Calvinists to have in our conversion; that his "poor free will [to use Mr. Toplady's expression, page 70, with respect to us] "had no employ," that he was "absolutely passive, and that" redemption "is as totally the operation of" the Father "as the severing of stones from their native quarry, and the erecting them into an elegant building, are the effects of human agency."—If the astonished reader ask, how I can prove a proposition so subversive of the gratitude which we owe to Christ for our redemption? I reply, By the very same argument by which Mr. T. proves that we are "absolutely passive" in the work of conversion, and that "conversion is totally the operation of God:" that is, by producing passages where Christ is metaphorically called a stone; and of these there are not a few. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. Isa. xxviii. 16.—Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. Matt. xxi. 34.—The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. Acts iv. 11.—To whom coming as to a living stone, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 4.—If to these texts we add those, in which he is compared to a foundation, to a rock, and to jewels, or precious stones, I could demonstrate [in the Calvinian way] that Christ was once as "absolutely passive" in the work of our redemption as a stone. When I consider such arguments as these, I cannot help wondering at the gross impositions of Pagan, Popish, and Calvinian Doctors. I find myself again in the midst of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Jupiter, if we believe the poet, turned *Niobe* into a rock. The tempter wanted Christ to turn a stone into bread. *Logica Romana* turns bread into Christ. But *Logica Genevensis* carries the bell, for she can, even without the Hocus Pocus of a massing Priest, turn Christ into a stone.—Mr. Toplady, far from recanting his argument a *lapide* confirms it by the following;

ARG. LVI. [p. 71.] "A stone has the advantage of you: man's rebellious heart is by nature, and so far as spiritual things are concerned, MORE intractable and unyielding than a stone itself. I may take up a stone, and throw it this way or that—and it obeys the impulse of my arm. Whereas in the sinner's heart, there is every species of hatred and opposition to God: nor can any thing, but omnipotent power, slay its enmity."

I am glad Mr. T. vouchsafes, in this place, to grant that *omnipotent power can slay the enmity*. I hope he will remember this concession, and no more turn from the *Prince of life*, to preach up the monster *Death*, as the slayer of the enmity. But, to come to the argument:

would Mr. T. think me in earnest, if I attempted to prove that a stone *had* [once] the advantage of him, with respect to getting learning, and that there was more omnipotence required to make him a scholar, than to make the stone he stands upon fit to take a degree in the university? However, I shall attempt to do it: displaying my skill in orthodox logic, I personate the schoolmaster who taught Mr. Toplady grammar, and probably found him once at play, when he should have been at his book, and I say, "Indeed, master, a stone has the advantage of you. A boy's playful heart is by nature, so far as grammar is concerned, *more* intractable and unyielding than a stone itself."—[*Now for the proof!*] "I may take up a stone, and throw it this way or that, and it instantly, and without the least degree of resistance, obeys the impulse of my arm: whereas you *resist* my orders, you *run away* from your book, or you *look off* from it. In your playful heart there is every species of hatred and opposition to your Accidence; and therefore *more* power is required to make you a scholar, than to make that stone a grammarian." Mr. Toplady's *voluntary humility* claps this argument as excellent; but his *good sense* hisses it as absurd, and says with St. Paul, *When I was a child, I spake as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

ARG. LVII. [p. 71.] Ah, but "God's gracious promise to renew his people, runs in this remarkable style: *I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh.*"—And does this prove *Calvinian bound will*, any more than these gracious commands to renew our own hearts prove *Pelagian free will*? *Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.—Make you a new heart and a new spirit.—Turn yourselves, and live ye?* Who does not see, that the evangelical union of such passages gives birth to the Scripture doctrine of *assisted free will*, which stands at an equal distance from *Calvinian Necessity*, and from *Pelagian, self-sufficient exertion*?

ARG. LVIII. [p. 73.] But, God "*worketh ALL things according to the counsel of his own will.*" Eph. i. 11."—By putting the word ALL in very large capitals, Mr. T. *seems* willing to insinuate, that God's decree *causes* all things; and of consequence, that God absolutely *works* the good actions of the righteous, and the bad deeds of the wicked. Whereas the apostle means only, that *all the things which God works*, he works them according to the counsel of his own most wise, gracious, and righteous will. But the things which God *works* are, in many cases, as different from the things which *we work*, as light is different from darkness. This passage, therefore, does not prove *Calvinian Necessity*: for when God made man, according to the counsel of his own

will, he made him a free agent, and set before him life and death; bidding him choose life. Now, to include Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit, and choosing death, among the things which God worketh, is to turn Manichee with a witness: it is to confound Christ and Belial; the acts of God, and the deeds of sinners. It is to suppose [horrible to think!] that God will send the reprobates to hell for his own deeds, or if you please, for what he has absolutely wrought in them and by them, according to the counsel of his own necessitating will. This dreadful doctrine is that capital part of Calvinism which is called *Absolute Predestination to death*. If Mr. T. denies that it is the second pillar of his doctrine of grace, he may turn to Sect. II. where he will find his peculiar Gospel "*upon its legs*."

I hope I need say no more upon this head, to convince the unprejudiced reader, that Mr. T.'s arguments in favour of *Calvinian necessity* are frivolous; and that Mr. Wesley advances a glaring truth, when he asserts, that on the principle of absolute predestination, there can be no future judgment [*upon any known principle of wisdom, equity, and justice*:] and that it requires more pains than all rational creatures will be ever able to take, to reconcile the doctrine of [Calvinian] reprobation with the doctrine of a judgment-day.

SECTION VIII.

An Answer to the Argument taken from GOD'S PRESCIENCE, whereby Mr. Toplady tries to prove, that the VERY CRUELTY which Mr. Wesley charges on Calvinism, is really chargeable on the Doctrine of General Grace.

MR. TOPLADY is a spirited writer. He not only tries to reconcile Calvinian reprobation with divine mercy, but he attempts to retort upon us the charge of holding a cruel doctrine.

ARG. LIX. [page 47.] "But what, if after all, that very cruelty which Mr. Wesley pretends to charge on Calvinism, be found really chargeable on Arminianism? I pledge myself to prove this—before I conclude this tract."—And accordingly [pp. 86, 87.] Mr. Toplady, after observing, in his way, that according to Mr. Wesley's doctrine, God offers his grace to many who put it from them, and gives it to many who receive it in vain, and who, on this account, are condemned; Mr. Toplady, I say, sums up his argument in these words: "If God knows that the offered grace will be rejected; 'twould be mercy to forbear the offer. Prove the contrary if you are able."

I have answered this objection *at large*, *Scripture Scales*, Vol. iii. Sect. vi. However, I shall say something upon it here. 1. God's perfections shine in such a manner as not to eclipse one another. Wisdom, justice, mercy, and truth, are the adorable and well-proportioned features of God's *moral face*, if I may venture upon that expression. Now, if in order to magnify his *mercy*, I thrust out his *wisdom* and *justice*, as I should do if I held a lawless Calvinian election ;—or, if in order to magnify his *justice*, I thrust out his *mercy* and *wisdom*, as I should do if I consistently held Calvinian reprobation ; should I not disfigure God's *moral face*, as much as I should spoil Mr. Toplady's *natural face*, if I swelled his eyes or cheeks to such a degree, as to leave absolutely no room for his other features ? The Calvinists forget that as human beauty does not consist in the monstrous bigness of *one* or *two* features, but in the harmonious and symmetrical proportion of *all* ; so divine glory does not consist in displaying a *mercy* and a *justice*, which would absolutely swallow up each other, together with *wisdom*, *holiness*, and *truth*. This would, however, be the case, if God, after having *wisely* decreed to make *free agents*, in order to display his *holiness*, *justice*, and *truth*, by *judging them according to their works*, necessitated them to be good or wicked, by decrees of *absolute* predestination to life and heaven, or of *absolute* reprobation to hell and damnation.

2. Do but allow, that God made *rational* creatures in order to rule them *as rational*, namely, by *laws* adapted to their nature ;—do but admit this truth, I say, which stands or falls with the Bible ; and it necessarily follows, that such creatures were made with an eye to a *day of judgment* ; and the moment this is granted, Mr. Toplady's argument vanishes into smoke. For, supposing that God had displayed *more mercy* towards those who die in their sins, by forbearing to give them grace, and to offer them more grace ;—or, in other words, supposing that God had shown the wicked *more mercy*, by showing them *no mercy at all* [which, by the by, is a contradiction in terms ;] yet, such a *merciless mercy* [if I may use the expression] would have blackened his *wisdom*, overthrown his *truth*, and destroyed his *justice*. What a poor figure, for instance, would his *justice* have made among his other attributes, if he had said, that he would judicially cast his unprofitable servants into outer darkness, for burying a talent which they never had, or for not receiving a Saviour who was always kept from them ? And what rationals would not have wondered at a *governor*, who, after having made moral agents in order to rule them according to their *free nature*, and to judge them in righte-

ousness according to *their works*, should nevertheless show himself.—

1. So *inconsistent*, as to rule them by *efficacious decrees*, which should absolutely necessitate some of them to work iniquity ; and others to work righteousness ; 2. So *unjust*, as to judge them according to the works which his own binding decrees had *necessitated* them to do ; and 3. So *cruel and unwise*, as to *punish* them with *eternal death*, according to a sentence of *absolute reprobation to death*, or of *absolute election to life*, which he passed beforehand, *without any respect to their works*, thousands of years before most of them were born ? By what art could so strange a conduct have been reconciled with the titles of *Lawgiver*, and *Judge of all the earth*, which God assumes ; or with his repeated declarations, that *justice and equity* are the basis of his throne ; and that, in point of judgment, his ways are perfectly equal ?

If Mr. T. should try to vindicate so strange a proceeding, by saying, that God could justly reprobate to eternal death myriads of unborn infants *for the sin of Adam* ; would he not make a bad matter worse ; since, upon the plan of the *absolute* predestination of all events, Adam's sin was *necessarily* brought about by the decree of the *means*, which decree, if Calvinism be true, God made in order to *secure and accomplish* the two grand decrees of the *end*, namely, the eternal decree of *finished damnation by Adam*, and the eternal decree of *finished salvation by Christ* ?

The absurdity of Mr. Toplady's argument may be placed in a clearer light by an illustration. The king, to display his royal benevolence, equity, and justice ; to maintain good order in his army, and excite his troopers to military diligence, promises to give a reward to all the men of a regiment of light-horse who shall ride so many miles without dismounting to plunder : and he engages himself to punish severely those who shall be guilty of that offence. He foresees, indeed, that many will slight his offered rewards, and incur his threatened punishment : nevertheless, for the above-mentioned reasons, he proceeds. Some men are promoted, and others are punished. A Calvinist highly blames the king's conduct. He says, that his Majesty would have shown himself *more gracious*, and would have asserted his sovereignty much better, if he had refused horses to the plunderers, and had punished them for lighting off horses *which they never had* : and that, on the other hand, it became his free grace to tie the rewardable dragoons fast to their saddles, and by this means to *necessitate* them to keep on horseback, and deserve the promised reward. Would not such a conduct have marked his Majesty's reputation with the stamp of disingenuity, cruelty, and folly ? And

yet, astonishing ! because we do not approve of *such a judicial distribution* of the *rewards* of eternal life, and the *punishments* of eternal death, Mr. Toplady fixes the charge of *cruelty* upon the Gospel which we preach ! He goes on :

ARG. LX. [page 85.] “According to Mr. Wesley’s own fundamental principle of *universal grace* ; grace itself, or the saving influence of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men, *does and must* become the ministration of eternal death to thousands and millions.”—[p. 89.] “Level, therefore, your tragical exclamations about *unmercifulness* at your own scheme, which truly and properly deserves them.”

The flaw of this argument consists in the words “*does and must,*” which Mr. T. puts in Italics. 1. In the word *does* : it is a great mistake to say, that upon Mr. W.’s principles, grace itself *does* become the ministration of eternal death to any soul. It is not for *grace*, but for the *abuse* or *neglect* of grace, and its saving light, that men are condemned. *This is the condemnation*, says Christ himself, *that light [the light of grace] is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.*—And St. Paul adds, that *the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath [in different degrees] appeared to all men.* John iii. 19. Tit. ii. 11. There is no medium between condemning men for not using a talent of grace which *they had*, or for not using ■ talent of grace which *they never had*. The former sentiment, which is perfectly agreeable to Reason, Scripture, and Conscience, is that of Mr. Wesley ; the latter sentiment, which contradicts one half of the Bible, shocks reason, and demolishes the doctrines of justice, is that of Mr. Toplady.

2. When this gentleman says, that God’s grace, upon Mr. Wesley’s principles, *must* become the ministration of death to millions, he advances as groundless a proposition as I would do, if I said, that the grace of creation, the grace of preservation, and the grace of a preached Gospel, *absolutely* destroy millions ; because millions, by wilfully abusing their *created* and *preserved* powers, or by neglecting so great salvation as the Gospel brings, pull down upon themselves an unnecessary, and therefore a *just* destruction.—3. We oppose the doctrine of *Absolute Necessity*, or the Calvinian *must*, as being inseparable from Manicheism : and we assert, that there is no *needs must* in the eternal death of any man, because Christ imparts a degree of temporary salvation to all, with power to obey, and a promise to bestow eternal salvation upon all that *will* obey. How ungenerous is it then, to charge upon us the very doctrine which we detest, when it has no *necessary* connexion with any of our principles ! How irrational to say, that if our doctrine of grace be true, God’s grace *must* become

the ministration of death to millions!—Ten men have a mortal disorder: a physician prepares a sovereign remedy for them all: five take it properly and recover, and five, who will not follow his prescriptions, die of their disorder: now, who but a prejudiced person would infer from thence, that the physician's sovereign remedy is *become the ministration of death* to the patients who die, because they would not take it? Is it right thus to confound a *remedy* with the *obstinate neglect* of it? A man *wilfully* starves himself to death with good food before him. I say that his *wilfulness* is the cause of his death: no, replies a decretist, it is the *good food* which you desire him to take. This absurd conclusion is all of a piece with that of Mr. Toplady.

ARG. LXI. [p. 89.] “The Arminian system represents the Father of mercies as offering grace to them, who he *knows* will only add sin to sin, and make themselves twofold more the children of hell by refusing it.”—Indeed it is not the Arminian system *only*, that says this: 1. All the *Calvinists*, who allow that God gave *angelic* grace to angels, though he knew that many of them would fall from that grace, and would fall *deeper*, than if they had fallen from a less exalted station:—2. *Jesus Christ*, who gave Judas the grace of apostleship, and represents God as giving a pound to his servants who squander it, as well as to those who use it properly:—And, 3. Mr. *Toplady* himself, who [notwithstanding his pretended horror for so scriptural a doctrine] dares not deny, that God gave the grace of creation to those who shall perish. Now the grace of creation implies spotless holiness; and if God could once graciously give spotless holiness to Judas in the loins of Adam, why could he not graciously restore to that apostle a degree of free agency to good, that he might be judged according to *his own works*, and not according to Calvinian decrees of *finished wickedness* and *finished damnation* in Adam? But,—4. What is still more surprising, Mr. T. himself [p. 51.] quotes these words, which so abundantly decide the question: *Thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven* [by the peculiar favours and Gospel privileges bestowed upon thee] *shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day.* Matt. xi. 23. Now I ask, Why were these *mighty works* done in Capernaum? Was it out of *love*—to bring Capernaum to repentance? Or was it out of *wrath*—that it might be *more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom than Capernaum*? There is no medium: Mr. Toplady must recant this part of the Bible, and of his book; or he must answer one of these two questions in the affirmative. If he say [as we do] that these *mighty works*, which might have

converted Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, were primarily wrought to bring Capernaum to repentance, he gives up Calvinism, which stands or falls with the doctrine of *necessitating means* used in order to bring about a *necessary* end. If he say [as Calvinism does] that these mighty works were *primarily* wrought to sink Capernaum into hell—into a deeper hell than Sodom, because the *end* always shows what the *means* were used for ; he runs upon the point of his own objection ; he pulls upon *his* doctrines of grace the very *unmercifulness* which he charges upon *ours*, and he shows to every unprejudiced reader, that the difficulty arising from the Prescience of God, with which the Calvinists think to demolish the doctrine of general grace, falls upon Calvinism with a double weight.—Mr. Toplady is sensible that God could never have *appeared* good and just, unless the wicked had been *absolutely inexcusable*, and that they could never have been *inexcusable*, if God had condemned them for burying a talent of grace which they never had ; and therefore Mr. T. tries to overthrow this easy solution of the difficulty by saying,

ARG. LXII. [p. 88.] “ Be it so,” that the wicked *are made inexcusable* by a day of grace and temporary salvation, “ yet, surely God can never be thought, knowingly to render a man more *inexcusable*, by taking such measures as will certainly load him with accumulated condemnation, out of *mere love* to that man ! ”—We grant it ; and therefore we assert, that it is not out of *mere love* that God puts us in a gracious state of *probation*, or *temporary salvation* ; but out of *wisdom*, *truth*, and distributive *justice*, as well as out of *mercy* and *love*. If God therefore were endued with no other perfection than that of *merciful love*, we would give up the doctrine of *judicial reprobation* ; for a God devoid of *distributive justice* could, and would save all sinners in the Calvinian way, that is, with a salvation perfectly finished without any of their works. But then, he would neither *judge* them, nor bestow eternal salvation upon them by way of *reward* for their works, as the Scriptures say he will.

Oh ! how much more reasonable and scriptural is it, to allow the doctrine of free grace, and free will, established in the *Scripture scales* ; and to maintain the *reprobation of justice*—an avoidable reprobation this, which is perpetually asserted in the Gospel, and will leave the wicked entirely *inexcusable*, and God perfectly righteous : —How much better is it, I say, to hold *such* a reprobation, than to admit *Calvinian* reprobation, which renders the wicked excusable and pitiable, as being condemned for doing what Omnipotence necessitated them to do ;—a reprobation this, which stigmatizes Christ as a shuffler, for offering to all a *salvation* from which most are absolutely

debarred ;—a cruel reprobation, which represents the Father of mercies as an unjust Sovereign, who takes such measures as will *unavoidably* load myriads of unborn men with accumulated condemnation, out of *free wrath* to their unformed souls.

Should Mr. Toplady say, “ That, according to the Gospel which we preach, the wicked shall *certainly* be damned ; and therefore the difference between us is but trifling after all ; seeing the Calvinists assert that some men, namely, those who are *eternally* reprobated by divine sovereignty, shall *certainly and unavoidably* be damned ; and the anti-calvinists say, that some men, namely, those who are *finally* reprobated by divine justice, shall be *certainly* though *avoidably* damned :”—I reply, that frivolous as the difference between these two doctrines may appear to those who judge according to the *appearance* of words, it is as capital as the difference between *avoidable* ruin and *unavoidable* destruction ; between *justice* and *injustice* ;—between *initial election* and *finished reprobation* ; between saying that God is the *first cause* of the damnation of the wicked, and asserting that *they are the first cause* of their own damnation. In a word, it is as great as the difference between the *north* and the *south*—between a Gospel made up of *Antinomian* free grace and barbarian *free wrath*, and a Gospel made up of *scriptural* free grace, and impartial, retributive *justice*.

Upon the whole, from the preceding answers it is evident, if I am not mistaken, that though the grand Calvinian objection taken from God’s *foreknowledge* may, at first sight, puzzle the simple ; yet it can bear neither the light of Scripture nor that of reason ; and it recoils upon Calvinism with all the force with which it is supposed to attack the *saving grace which has appeared to all men*.

SECTION IX.

An Answer to the charges of robbing the Trinity, and encouraging Deism, which charges Mr. T. brings against the doctrine of the Anti-Calvinists.

MR. T. thinks his cause so good, that he supposes himself able not only to stand on the defensive ; but also to attack the Gospel which we preach. From his *Babel*, therefore, [his strong tower of *confusion*] he makes a bold sally, and charges us thus :

ARG. LXIII. [p. 91.] “ *Arminianism robs the Father of his Sovereignty.*”—This is a mistake ; Arminianism dares not attribute to him

the grim sovereignty of a Nero ; but if it does not humbly allow him all the sovereignty which Scripture and reason ascribe to him, so far it is wrong, and so far we oppose Pelagian *Arminianism* as well as Manichean *Calvinism*.—It “*robs the Father of his decrees* :”—This is a mistake : it reverences all his *righteous*, scriptural decrees ; though it shudders at the thought of imputing to him unscriptural, Calvinian decrees, more wicked and absurd than the decrees of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.—It “*robs the Father of his providence* :”—Another mistake ! Our doctrine only refuses to make God the author of sin, and to lead men to the Pagan error of *fatalism*, or to the Manichean error of a two-principled god, who *absolutely* works all things in all men, as a showman works all things in his puppets : fixing *necessary* virtue on the good, and *necessary* wickedness on the wicked, to the subversion of all the divine perfections, and to the entire overthrow of the second Gospel axiom, of Christ's tribunal, and of the *wisdom* and *justice*, which the Scriptures ascribe to God, as *Judge of the whole earth*.

ARG. LXIV. [Ibid.] “*It [Arminianism] robs the Son of his efficacy as a Saviour*.”—Another mistake ! It only dares not pour upon him the shame of being the *Absolute Reprobater* of myriads of unborn creatures, whose nature he assumed with a gracious design to be absolutely their *temporary* Saviour ; promising to prove their *eternal* Saviour upon Gospel terms : and accordingly, he *saves all* mankind with a *temporary* salvation ; and *those who obey him* with an *eternal* salvation. The *efficacy* of his blood is then complete, so far as he *absolutely* designed it should be.

ARG. LXV. [Ibid.] “*It [Arminianism] robs the Spirit of his efficacy as a Sanctifier*.” By no means : for it maintains, that the Spirit, which is the grace and light of Christ, *entightens every man that comes into the world*, and leads the worst of men to some temporary good, or at least restrains them from the commission of a thousand crimes. So far the Spirit's grace is *efficacious in all* ; and, if it is not completely and *eternally* efficacious in those who *harden their hearts*, and by their wilful hardness *treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath*,—it is because the day of wrath, for which the wicked were *secondarily** made, is to be the day of the righteous judgment of God,

* All angels and men were *primarily* made to enjoy an *accepted time*, and a temporary day of salvation. Those angels and men, who know and improve their day of salvation, were *secondarily* made for the day of remunerative love, and for a kingdom *prepared for them from the beginning of the world*. But those angels and men who do not know and improve their day of salvation, were *secondarily* made for the day of retributive wrath, and for the fire *prepared for the devil and his angels*.

who will render to every man according to his deeds. Rom. ii. 5, 6. and not the day of the *unrighteous* judgment of Calvin, who (doctrinally) renders to every man according to a *finished* salvation in Christ, productive of necessary goodness ; and according to a *finished* damnation in Adam, productive of *remediless* wickedness, and all its dreadful consequences.

ARG. LXVI. [p. 92.] Mr. Toplady produces a long quotation from Mr. Sloss, which, being divested of the verbose dress in which error generally appears, amounts to this plain abridged argument. " If the doctrine of Calvinian election be false, because all mankind are not the objects of that election, and because all men have an equal right to the divine favour ; it follows that Infidels are right when they say, that the Jewish and the Christian revelations are false ; for all mankind are not *elected* to the favour of having the Old and New Testaments : and therefore Arminianism encourages Infidelity."

This argument is good to convince Pelagian levellers, that God is *partial* in the distribution of his talents, and that he indulges *Jews* and *Christians* with a holy, *peculiar* election and calling, of which those who never heard of the Bible are utterly deprived. I have myself made this remark in the *Essay on the gratuitous* election and *partial* reprobation which St. Paul frequently preaches : but the argument does not affect *our* anti-calvinian Gospel. For, 1. *We* do not say, that Calvinian election is false, because it supposes that God is *peculiarly* gracious to some men ; for this we strongly assert as well as the Calvinists ; but because it supposes that God is *so peculiarly* gracious to some men as to be *absolutely* merciless and *unjust* to all the rest of mankind.

2. That very revelation which Mr. Sloss thinks we betray to the Deists, informs us, that though all men are not indulged with the *peculiar* blessings of Judaism and Christianity, yet they are all *chosen* and *called* to be righteous, at least according to the covenants made with *fallen* Adam, and *spared* Noah. Hence St. Peter says, that, *In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness* [according to his light, though it should be only the *lowest* degree of that light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world] *is accepted of him* : and St. Paul speaks of some *Gentiles* who, though they have not the law of Moses or the law of Christ, *do by nature* [in its state of initial restoration through the seed of life given to fallen Adam in the promise] *the things contained in the law, and are a law unto themselves ; showing the work of the law written in their hearts*. Therefore, though there is a *gratuitous* election, which draws after it a *gratuitous* reprobation from the blessings peculiar to Judaism and Christianity ; there is no

Calvinian election, which draws after it ■ gratuitous reprobation from all saving grace, and necessarily involves the greatest part of mankind in unavoidable damnation. Hence, if I mistake not, it appears that when Mr. *Sloss* charges us with "having contributed to the prevailing Deism of the present time, by furnishing the adversaries of Divine Revelation with arguments against Christianity," he [as well as Mr. *Toplady*] gratuitously imputes to our doctrine what really belongs to Calvinism. For there is a perfect agreement between the absolute necessity of events, which is asserted by *Calvinian bound willers*; and that which is maintained by *Deistical fatalists*: and it is well known, that the horrors of the absolute reprobation which the Calvinists fancy they see in Rom. ix. have tempted many Moralists, who read that chapter with the reprobating glosses of Calvin and his followers, to bid adieu to Revelation; it being impossible that a scheme of doctrine, which represents God as the absolute Reprober of myriads of unborn infants, should have the Parent of good, and the God of love, for its author.

SECTION X.

An Answer to the Arguments by which Mr. Toplady attempts to retort the charge of ANTINOMIANISM, and to show that Calvinism is more conducive to HOLINESS than the opposite Doctrine.

MR. HILL asserts, that Mr. T. retorts all our objections upon us in a most masterly manner. Let us see how he retorts the objection which we make to absolute predestination—a doctrine this, by which necessary holiness is imposed upon the elect, and necessary wickedness upon the reprobates: how the fixing unavoidable holiness upon a minority, and unavoidable wickedness upon ■ majority of mankind, is reconcilable with the glory of Divine Holiness, Mr. Toplady informs us in the following argument.

ARG. LXVII. [page 93, 94.] Calvinian* "Election ensures holiness to a very great part of mankind: whereas precarious grace, deriving

* The author of *A Letter to an Arminian Teacher* [a letter this, which I have quoted in a preceding note,] advances the same argument in these words, p. 5. "The doctrine of eternal [he means Calvinian] election," for we believe the right, godly, eternal election, maintained in the Scriptures, "concludes God more merciful than the Arminian doctrine of supposed universal redemption, because that doctrine which absolutely ascertains the regeneration, effectual calling, the sanctification, &c. as well as the eternal salvation of an innumerable company, &c. Rev. vii. 9. must represent God more merciful than the Arminian scheme, which cannot ascertain the eternal salvation of one man now living," &c. As it is possible to kill two birds with one stone, I hope that my answer to Mr. Toplady will satisfy Mr. McGowan.

all its efficacy from the caprice of free will, could not ensure holiness to any one individual of the whole species.”—Had Mr. T. stated the case properly, he would have said, “Calvinian election, which ensures necessary holiness to a *minority* of mankind; and Calvinian reprobation, which ensures *necessary wickedness* to a *majority* of mankind, promote human sanctity *more* than the *partial election of grace*, which formerly afforded the *Jews*, and now affords the *Christians*, abundant helps to be *peculiarly* holy under their dispensations of *peculiar* grace:—yea, *more* than the *impartial election of justice*, which under all the dispensations of divine grace, *chooses the man that is godly*, to rewards of grace and glory;—and *more* than the *reprobation of justice*, which is extended to none but such as bury their talent of grace, by wilful unbelief and voluntary disobedience.

If Mr. T. had thus stated the case, according to his real sentiments and ours, every candid reader would have seen that our doctrines of grace are far more conducive to human sanctity than those of Calvin: 1. Because Calvinism ensures *human sanctity* to none of the elect: for a sanctity which is as *necessary* to a creature as motion is to a moved puppet, is not the sanctity of a *free agent*; and, of consequence, it is not *human sanctity*: 2. Because Calvinism ensures *remediless wickedness* to all the reprobate, and *remediless wickedness* can never be “*human sanctity*.”

With respect to what Mr. T. says, that our doctrines of grace do “not ensure holiness to any one individual of the whole species;” if by “ensured holiness,” he means ■ certain salvation without any work of faith, and labour of love, he is greatly mistaken: for our Gospel absolutely ensures such a salvation, and of consequence *infant holiness*, to that numerous part of mankind who die in their infancy. Nay, it absolutely ensures a seed of redeeming, sanctifying grace to *all mankind*, so long as the day of grace or initial salvation lasts; for we maintain, as well as St. Paul, that *the free gift is come upon all men to justification of life*, Rom. v. 18.: and we assert, as well as our Lord, that of such [of infants] is the kingdom of heaven, and therefore some capacity to enjoy it, which capacity we believe to be inseparably connected with a seed of holiness. Add to this, that our Gospel as well as Calvinism, ensures eternal salvation to all the adult who are faithful unto death. According to our doctrine *these sheep shall never perish*: to these elect of justice, who make their election of grace sure by obedience, Christ gives eternal life in the fullest sense of the word: and none shall pluck them out of his hand. If Mr. T. had placed our Gospel in this true light, his objection would have appeared as just as the rodomontade of Goliath when he was going to despatch David.

ARG. LXVIII. [p. 94.] Mr. T. tries to make up the Antinomian gap, by doing that which borders upon giving up Calvinism. "No man [says he] according to our system, has a right to look upon himself as elected, till sanctifying grace has converted him to faith and good works."

This flimsy salvo has quieted the fears of many godly Calvinists, when the Antinomianism of their system stared them in the face. To show the absurdity of this evasion, I need only ask, has not every man a right to believe the truth? If I am *absolutely* elected to eternal life, while I commit adultery and murder, while I defile my father's wife, and deny my Saviour with oaths and curses; why may not I believe it? Is there one sentence of Scripture which commands me to believe a lie, or forbids me to believe the truth?—"O, but you have no right to believe yourself elected, till sanctifying grace has converted you to faith and good works." Then it follows, that as an adult sinner, I am not elected to the reward of the inheritance, or to eternal life in glory, till I believe and do good works; or it follows that I have no right to believe the truth. If Mr. T. affirm, that I have no right to believe the truth, he makes himself ridiculous before all the world: and if he say, that I am not absolutely elected, till I am converted to faith and good works; it follows, that every time I am perverted from faith and good works, I forfeit my election of justice. Thus, under the guidance of Mr. T. himself, I escape the fatal rock of Calvinian election, and find myself in the safe harbour of old, practical Christianity: *Ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God: Let no man deceive you with vain words.* For if I have no right to believe myself an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, while I turn whoremonger; it is evident that whoredom deprives me of my right:—much more adultery and murder. Hence it appears that Mr. T. cannot prop up the Calvinian ark, but by flatly contradicting Paul, which is a piece of impiety; and by asserting that elect whoremongers have no right to believe the truth while they commit whoredom, which is a glaring absurdity.

ARG. LXIX. [p. 95.] After having made up the Antinomian gap, by giving up either Calvinian election, or the incontestable right which every man has to believe the truth, Mr. Toplady tries to retort the charge of Antinomianism upon our doctrines of grace: and he does it by producing one "Thomson, who, when he was in a fit of intemperance, if any one reminded him of the wrath of God threatened against such courses, would answer, I am a child of the devil to-day; but I have free will: and to-morrow I will make myself a child of God."

To this I answer, 1. The man spoke like a person "*in a fit of intemperance*," and there is no reasoning with such, any more than with *mad men*. But Dr. Crisp, when he was sober, and in the pulpit too, could say, "A believer may be assured of pardon as soon as he commits any sin, even adultery and murder.—Sins are but scarecrows and bugbears to frighten ignorant children, but men of understanding, see they are counterfeit things:" and indeed it must be so, if, as Mr. T. tells us, *Whatever is, is right*, and necessarily flows from the predestinating will of him who does all things well.

2. This Thomson [as appears by his speech] was a *rigid* free willer; one who discarded the *first* Gospel axiom, and the doctrine of free grace; and therefore, his error does not affect our Gospel. Nay, we oppose *such free willers*, as much as we do the *rigid bound willers*, who discard the *second* Gospel axiom, and the necessity of sincere obedience in order to our *judicial* justification, and *eternal* salvation.

3. If Thomson had been sober and reasonable, Mr. Wesley might easily have made up the pretended Antinomian gap of Arminianism five different ways:—1. By showing him, that although free will may reject a good motion, yet it cannot raise one without free grace; and therefore to say, "*To-morrow I will make myself a child of God*," is as absurd in a man, as it would be in a woman to say, *To-morrow I will conceive alone*:—it is as *impious* as to say, *To-morrow I will absolutely command God, and he shall obey me*.—2. By showing him his imminent danger, and the horror of his present state, which he himself acknowledged when he said, "*I am a child of the devil to-day*."—3. By urging the uncertain length of the day of salvation. Grace gives us no room to depend upon *to-morrow*; its constant language being, *Now is the accepted time*.—4. By pressing the hardening nature of presumptuous sin.—And 5. By displaying the terrors of *just wrath*, which frequently says, *Take the talent from him*.—*Because ye refused, I will be avenged. I give thee up to thy own heart's lust, to a reprobate mind—Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee*.

These are five rational and scriptural ways of making up the supposed Antinomian gap of our Gospel. But if Mr. Thomson had been a Calvinist, and had said like Mr. Fulsome, "I have had a call, and my election is safe: as my good works can add nothing to my *finished salvation*, so my bad words can take nothing from it. Satan may pound me, if he please; but Jesus must replevy me. Let me wander where I will from God, Christ must fetch me back again. The covenant is *unconditionally* ordered in all things and sure. All things

must work for good to the elect." "*And if all things,*" [says Mr. Hill] "*then their very sins and corruptions are included in the royal promise.*"

"Whoredom and drunkenness may hurt another, but they cannot hurt me. God will overrule sin for my good, and his glory: Whatever is, is right: for God worketh all things in all men, even wickedness in the wicked, and how much more in his elect, who are his chosen instruments!"—If Mr. Thomson, I say, had been a Calvinist, and had *thus* stood his ground in the Antinomian gap which Calvin, Dr. Crisp, Mr. Fulsome, Mr. Hill, and Mr. Toplady have made; who could reasonably have beaten him off? Do not all his conclusions flow from the doctrine of *absolute election* and *finished salvation*, as unavoidably as *four* is the result of *two* and *two*?

ARG. LXX. [p. 97.] Mr. T. attempts again to stop up the Antinomian gap, which *fatalism* and *Calvinian predestination* make in practical religion. Calling to his assistance Zeno, the founder of the *Stoics*, or *rigid predestinarians* among the heathens, he says, Zeno one day thrashed his servant for pilfering. The fellow, knowing his master was a fatalist, thought to bring himself off by alleging that he was *destined to steal*, and therefore ought not to be beat for it."—"You are destined to steal, are you?" answered the philosopher: "then you are no less *destined to be thrashed* for it: and laid on some hearty blows extraordinary."—I do not wonder that Mr. Hill, in his *Finishing Stroke*, calls Mr. Toplady's arguments "*most masterly*;" for this argument of Zeno is yet *more masterly* than his own: "I shall not take the least notice of him, any more than if I were travelling on the road, I would stop to lash, or even order *my footman* to lash, every little impertinent quadruped in a village, that should come out and bark at me." Mr. Toplady, in the *advertisement* placed at the head of his pamphlet, represents some of us as *unworthy of even being pilloried in a preface, or flogg'd at a pamphlet's tail*:" We are now arrived at the *tail* of his pamphlet, in the body of which he has thought Mr. Wesley so highly *worthy* of his *rod*, as to "*flog*" him with the gratuity, absoluteness, mercy, and justice, which are peculiar to the *reprobation* defended through the whole performance. If seriousness did not become us, when we vindicate the injured attributes of the *Judge of all the earth*, I might be tempted to ask with a smile, has Mr. T. so worn out his *rod*, in making "*More work for Mr. Wesley*," that he is now obliged to borrow Zeno's *stick* to finish the execution at the *pamphlet's tail*? For my part, as I have no idea of riveting orthodoxy upon my readers with a *stick*, and of solving the rational

objections of my opponents by "*laying on some hearty blows*," and so "*thrashing*" them into conviction, or into silence, I own that *Logica Zenonis* and *Logica Genevensis* being of a piece, either of them can easily beat me out of the field. Arguments *a lapide* are laughable: but I flee before arguments *a baculo*. However, in my retreat, I will venture to prevent Mr. T. with the following queries.

If Zeno, in vindicating *Fatalism*, could say to a thief, that he was absolutely predestinated to *steal*, and to be *thrashed* for stealing; is it not more than Mr. Toplady can say in vindication of *Calvinism*? For, upon his scheme, may not a man be *absolutely* predestinated, not only to *steal*, but also to *escape thrashing*, and to *obtain salvation* by stealing? Mr. Toplady is Mr. Hill's second; and Mr. Hill in his fourth letter, [where he shows the *happy effects* of sin] tells the public and me, "Onesimus *robbed* Philemon his master; and fleeing from justice, was brought under Paul's preaching and *converted*." Thus Zeno's predestination failed, and with it Zeno's argument; for robbery led not Onesimus to *thrashing*, but to *conversion* and *glory*, if we believe Mr. Hill. And if Mr. *Fulsome* is an elect person, why might he not be guilty of as *fortunate* a robbery? Why might not a similar decree "*secure and accomplish the* [the same Evangelical] *end by the* [same Antinomian] *means*?" Mr. Toplady may prevail over us by borrowing Zeno's cane, and the whip of Mr. Hill's *lashing footman*; but his pen will never demonstrate, 1. That Calvinism does not *rationaly* lead all her admirers to the deepest mire of *speculative* Antinomianism: and 2. That when they are there, nothing can keep them from weltering in the dirt of *practical* Antinomianism, but an unhappy inconsistency between their actions and their principles.

SECTION XI.

A Caution against the Tenet, Whatever is, is right; an Antinomian Tenet this, which Mr. T. calls "a first Principle of the Bible."—An answer to his Challenge about finding a middle Way between the Calvinian Doctrine of PROVIDENCE, and the Atheistical Doctrine of CHANCE.

WHATEVER the true God works is undoubtedly *right*. But if the Deity *absolutely* works all things in all men, good and bad, it evidently follows, 1. That the two-principled deity preached by *Manes* is the true God: 2. That the *bad* principle of this double deity works *wickedness* in the *wicked*, as necessarily as the *good* principle works

righteousness in the righteous. And 3. That the original of wickedness being divine, wickedness is as right as the deity from whom it flows. Upon this horrid, Manichean scheme, who can wonder at Mr. Toplady saying,

ARG. LXXI. [p. 96.] "This is a first principle of the *Bible*, and of sound reason, that *Whatever is, is right*; or will answer some great end, &c. in its relation to the whole."—Error is never more dangerous than when it looks a little like truth. But when it is imposed upon the simple as a *first principle of the Bible and of sound reason*, it makes dreadful work. How conclusively will a rigid Predestinarian reason if he says, "Whatever is, is right: and therefore sin is right. Again, it is wrong to hinder what is right: sin is right: and therefore it is wrong to hinder sin.—Once more, we ought to do what is right: sin is right, and therefore we ought to commit sin."—Now, in opposition to Mr. Toplady's *first principle*, I assert as a *first principle of reason*, that, though it was right in God not absolutely to hinder sin, yet *sin is always wrong*.—"Oh, but God permitted it, and will get himself glory by displaying his vindictive justice in punishing it: for the *ministration of condemnation is glorious*." This argument has deluded many a pious Calvinist. To overthrow it, I need only observe, that *righteousness exceeds condemnation in glory*.

In what respect is sin right? Can it be right in respect of God, if it brings him *less* glory than righteousness? Can it be right in respect of man, if it brings temporal misery upon *all*, and eternal misery upon *some*? Can it be right in respect of the *Adamic law*, the *law of Moses*, or the *law of Christ*? Certainly no: for sin is equally the transgression of all these laws. "Oh, but it is right with respect to the evangelical promise."—By no means: for the evangelical promise, vulgarly called *The Gospel*, testifies of Christ, the destroyer of sin, and offers us a remedy against sin. Now, if sin were *right*, the Gospel which remedies it, and Christ who destroys it, would be *wrong*. I conclude, then, that if sin be right, neither with respect of God nor with respect of man; neither with regard to the *law* nor with regard to the *Gospel*; it is *right* in no shape: it is *wrong* in every point of view.

"But why did God permit it?" Indeed he never properly permitted it, unless Mr. Toplady, who does not scruple to call God "*the permittor of evil*," can prove, that to *forbid* in the most solemn manner, and under the severest penalty, is the same thing as to *permit*.

Should you ask, Why did not God *absolutely hinder sin*? I still answer, 1. Because his *wisdom* saw that a world where *free agents* and *necessary agents* are mixed, is better [all things considered] than a world stocked with nothing but *necessary agents*, i. e. creatures *absolutely hindered* from sinning.—2. Because his *distributive justice* could be displayed no other way, than by the creation of *accountable free agents*, made with an eye to a *day of judgment*.—3. Because it would be as absurd to *necessitate free agents*, as to bid *free agents be*, that they might *not be free agents*;—as foolish as to form *accountable creatures*, that they might *not be accountable*.—And 4. Because when God saw that the free agency of his creatures would introduce sin, he determined to overrule it, or remedy it in such a manner as would, upon the whole, render this world, with all the *voluntary evil*, and *voluntary good* in it, better than a world of *necessary agents*, where nothing but *necessary good* would have been displayed: an inferior sort of good this, which would no more have admitted of the exercise of God's *political wisdom* and *distributive justice*, than the excellence of precious stones and fine flowers admits of laws, rewards, and punishments.

Should the reader ask, how far we may safely go to meet the truth which borders most on Mr. Toplady's false principle, *whatever is, is right*? I answer, 1. We may grant, nay, we ought to assert, that God will get himself glory every way. Evangelical grace and just wrath minister to his praise, though not equally: and therefore God willeth not *primarily* the death of his creatures. Punishment is his *strange work*; and he delights *more* in the exercise of his *remunerative goodness*, than in the exercise of his *vindictive justice*.—2. Hence it appears, that the wrath of man, and the rage of the devil, will *turn to God's praise*: but it is only to his *inferior* praise. For, though the blessed will sing loud hallelujahs to divine justice, when vengeance shall overtake the ungodly; and though the consciences of the ungodly will give God glory, and testify that he is holy in all his works, and righteous in all his vindictive ways; yet, this glory will be only the glory of the ministration of condemnation:—a dispensation this, which is inferior to the dispensation of righteous mercy. Hence it appears, that those who die in their sins, would have brought more glory to God by choosing righteousness and life, than they do by choosing death in the error of their ways. But still, this *inferior* praise, arising from the *condemnation* and *punishment* of *ungodly free agents*—this *inferior* praise, I say, mixed with the *superior* praise arising from the *justification* and *rewards* of *godly free agents*, will far exceed the praise which might have accrued to God from the

unavoidable obedience, and absurd rewards of necessitated agents,—of angels and men absolutely bound to obey by a necessitating grace, like that which rigid bound willers preach ; were we even to suppose, that this forcible grace had Calvinistically caught all rational creatures in a net of finished salvation, and had drawn them all to heaven as irresistibly as Simon Peter drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three. For, before the Lawgiver and Judge of all the earth, the unnecessitated voluntary goodness of one angel, or one man, is more excellent than the necessary goodness of a world of creatures, as unavoidably and passively virtuous, as a diamond is unavoidably and passively bright.

ARG. LXXII. [p. 96.] With respect to the second part of Mr. Toplady's doctrine, that whatever is, is right, because "*it will answer some great end, &c. in its relation to the whole ;*" it is nothing but logical paint put on a *false principle*, to cover its deformity ; for error can imitate Jezebel, who laid natural paint on her withered face, to fill up her hideous wrinkles, and impose upon the spectators. I may perhaps prove it by an illustration. I want to demonstrate that cheating, extortion, litigiousness, breaking the peace, robberies, and murders, are all right, and I do it by asserting, "*That they answer some great ends in their relation to the whole ; for they employ the Parliament in making laws to prevent, end, or punish them ; they afford business to all the judges, magistrates, lawyers, sheriffs, constables, jailers, turnkeys, thief-catchers, and executioners in the kingdom : and when robbers and murderers are hanged, they reflect praise upon the government which extirpates them ; they strike terror into the wicked ; and their untimely dreadful end sets off the happiness of a virtuous course of life, and the bliss which crowns the death of the righteous. Besides, many murderers and robbers have been brought to Christ for pardon and salvation, like the dying thief, who by his robbery had the good luck to meet Christ on the cross : so that his own gallows, as well as our Lord's cross, proved the tree of life to that happy felon.*"—The mischievous absurdity of these pleas for the excellence of wickedness, puts me in mind of the arguments, by which a greedy publican of my parish once exculpated himself, when I reproved him for encouraging tippling and drunkenness. "The more ale we sell," said he, "the greater is the king's revenue. If it were not for us, the king could not live ;—nor could he pay the fleet and army ;—and if we had neither fleet nor army, we should soon fall into the hands of the French." So great are the ends which tippling answers in its relation to the whole British empire, if we may

believe a tapster, who pleads for drunkenness as plausibly as some good mistaken men do for all manner of wickedness.

From the whole, if I am not mistaken, we may safely conclude, that, though all God's works are *right*, yet *sin*, the work of fallen angels and fallen men, is *never right*; and that, though the universe, with all its sinfulness, is better than a *sinless world necessitated* to be sinless by the destruction of *free agents*; yet, as there is so much *sin* in the world, through the wrong use which free agents make of their powers, Mr. T. advances an unscriptural and irrational maxim, when he says, that *Whatever is, is right*: and he imposes upon us an *Antinomian* paradox, when he asserts that this dangerous maxim "Is a first principle of the Bible, and of sound reason." I repeat it: it was *right* in God to create free agents, to put them under a practicable law, and to determine to punish them according to their works, if they wantonly broke that law; but it could never be *right* in free agents to break it, unless God had bound them to do it by making *Calvinian* decrees necessarily productive of sin and wickedness. And supposing God had forbid free agents to sin by his law, and had *necessitated* [which is more than to *enjoin*] them to sin by *Calvinian decrees*; we desire Mr. T. to show how it could have been *right* in God to *forbid sin* by law, to *necessitate* men to sin by a decree, and to send them into eternal fire for not keeping a law which he had *necessitated* them to break.

The reasonableness of this doctrine brings to my remembrance the boldness of Mr. T.'s challenge about the *Calvinian* doctrine of Providence—a doctrine this, which asserts that God *absolutely necessitates* some men to *sin* and be *damned*. See Sect. ii.

ARG. LXXIII. [p. 73.] "Upon the plan of Mr. Wesley's consequence, the wretch was not a fool, but wise, who said in his heart *There is no God*. I defy the Pelagian to strike out a middle way between Providence and Chance," i. e. between *Chance* and the *Calvinian* notions of a *Providence*, which *absolutely* predestinates sin, and *necessitates* men and devils to commit it, &c. "Why did the Heathens themselves justly deem Epicurus an *Atheist*? Not because he denied the being of a God (for he asserted that;) but because he denied the agency of God's universal providence."

From this quotation it is evident, 1. That Mr. T. indirectly charges us with holding an *Epicurean*, *Atheistical* doctrine about *Providence*, because we abhor the doctrine of a predestination which represents God as the author of sin.—And 2. That he *defies* or challenges us to point out a middle way between the *Atheistical* doctrine of *Chance*, and the *Calvinian* doctrine of *Providence*. This challenge is too

important to be disregarded: an answer to it will conclude the argumentative part of this tract.

There are two opposite errors with respect to *Providence*. The *first* is that of the Epicurean philosophers, who thought that God does not at all concern himself about our sins, but leaves us to go on as we please, and as chance directs. The *second* is that of the rigid Predestinarians, who imagine that God *absolutely* predestinates sin, and *necessarily* brings it about to accomplish his absolute decrees of eternally saving some men through Christ, and of eternally damning all the rest of mankind through Adam. Of these two erroneous sentiments, the latter appears to us the worse; seeing it is better to represent God as doing *nothing*, than to represent him as doing *wickedness*. The truth lies between these two opinions; God's providence is *peculiarly concerned about sin*, but it does by no means *necessarily bring it about*. By this reasonable doctrine we answer Mr. T.'s challenge, and strike out the middle way between *his* error and that of *Epicurus*.

If you ask, how far God's providence is concerned about sin? we reply, that it is concerned about it four ways. *First*, in *morally* hindering the *internal* commission of it before it is committed. *Secondly*, in *providentially* hindering [at times] the *external* commission of it, when it has been intentionally committed. *Thirdly*, in marking, bounding, and overruling it, while it is committed. And, *fourthly*, in bringing about means of properly pardoning, or exemplarily punishing it, *after* it has been committed. Dwell we a moment upon each of these particulars.

1. *Before* sin is committed, divine Providence is engaged in *morally* hindering the internal commission of it. In order to this God does two things: First, he *forbids* sin by natural, verbal, or written laws. And secondly, he keeps up our powers of body and soul; enduing us with *liberty*, whereby we may abstain, like moral agents, from the commission of sin; furnishing us besides with a variety of motives and helps to resist every temptation to sin: a great variety this, which includes all God's threatenings and promises;—all his exhortations and warnings;—all the checks of our consciences, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit;—all the counsels of good men, and the exemplary punishments of the wicked; together with the tears and blood of Christ, and the other *peculiar* means of grace, which God has appointed to keep Christians from sin, and to strengthen them in the performance of their duty.

2. When sin is committed in the intention, God frequently prevents the *outward* commission, or the *full* completion of it, by peculiar

interpositions of his providence. Thus he hindered the men of Sodom from injuring Lot, by striking them with blindness:—he hindered Pharaoh from enslaving the Israelites, by drowning him in the Red Sea;—he hindered Balaam from cursing Israel, by putting a bridle in his mouth:—he hindered Jeroboam from hurting the prophet who came out of Judah, by drying up his royal hand, when he stretched it forth, saying, *Lay hold on him*:—he hindered Herod from destroying the holy child Jesus, by warning Joseph to flee into Egypt, &c. &c. The Scriptures, and the history of the world, are full of accounts of the ordinary and extraordinary interpositions of Divine Providence respecting the detection of intended mischief, and the preservation of persons and states, whom the wicked determined to destroy: and to go no farther than England, the providential discovery of the gunpowder plot, is as remarkable an instance as any, that God keeps a watchful eye upon the counsels of men, and confounds their devices whenever he pleases.

3. During the commission of sin, God's providence is engaged in marking it, in setting bounds to it, or in overruling it in a manner quite contrary to the expectation of sinners. When Joseph's brethren contrived the getting money by selling him into Egypt, God contrived the preservation of Jacob's household. Thus, when *Haman* contrived a gallows to hang *Mordecai* thereon, the Lord so overruled this cruel design, that *Haman* was hung on that very gallows. Thus, when *Satan* wanted to destroy *Job*, God set bounds to his rage, and bid the fierce accuser spare the good man's life. That envious fiend did his worst to make the patient saint curse God to his face; but the Lord so overruled his malice, that it worked for good to *Job*. For when *Job's* patience had had its perfect work, all his misfortunes ended in double prosperity, and all his tempestuous tossings raised him to a higher degree of perfection: for, *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment*, 2 Pet. ii. 9.—Thus, again, to preserve the seed of the righteous, God formerly kept 100 prophets, and 7000 true Israelites, from the cruelty of *Jezebel*; and, for the sake of the sincere Christians in *Judea*, he shortened the great tribulation spoken of, Matt. xxiv. 22. When the ungodly are most busy in sinning, God's providence is most employed in counterworking their sin, in putting bounds to their desperate designs, and in making a way for the godly to escape out of temptation, that they may be able to bear it: for the rod of the ungodly cometh not [with its full force] into the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hand into iniquity, through such powerful

and lasting temptations, as would make it *impossible* for them to stand firm in the way of duty. Ps. cxxv. 3.

4. When sin is actually committed, the providence of God, in conjunction with his mercy and justice, is employed, either in using means to bring sinners to repentance, confession, and pardon, or in inflicting upon them such punishments as seem most proper to divine wisdom. To be convinced of it, read the history of man's redemption by Jesus Christ. Mark the various steps by which Providence brings the guilty to conviction, the penitent to pardon, the finally impenitent to destruction, and all to some degree of punishment. By what an amazing train of providential dispensations were Joseph's brethren, for instance, brought to remember, lament, and smart for their cruel behaviour to him! And how did God, by various afflictions, bring his rebellious people to consider their ways, and to humble themselves before him in the land of their captivity! What an amazing work had Divine Providence in checking and punishing the sin of Pharaoh in Egypt;—that of the Israelites in the wilderness;—that of David and his house in Jerusalem—and that of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar in Babylon!

Evangelically and providentially opening the way for the return of sinners, and repaying obdurate offenders to their face, make one half of God's work as he is the gracious and righteous Governor of men. We cannot doubt it if we take notice of the innumerable means by which *conversions* and *punishments* are brought about.—To touch only upon *punishments*: some extend to the sea, others to the land: some spread over particular districts, others over whole kingdoms:—some affect a whole family, and others a whole community: some affect the soul, and others the body:—some fall only upon one limb, or one of the senses:—others upon the whole animal frame and all the senses:—some affect our well-being, others our being itself:—some are confined to this world, and others extend to a future state: some are of a temporal and others of an eternal nature. Now, since Providence, in subserviency to Divine justice, manages all these punishments and innumerable consequences, how mistaken is Mr. T. when he insinuates that our doctrine supposes God to be an idle spectator while sin is committed!

5. With respect to the *gracious* tempers of the righteous, we believe that they all flow [though without *Calvinian* necessity] from the *free gift* which is come upon all men, and from the *light* which enlightens every man that cometh into the world. And as to their good works, we are so far from excluding Divine grace and Providence, in order to exalt absolute free will, that we assert, Not one good work

would ever be begun, continued, or ended, if divine grace within us, and divine providence without us, did not animate our souls, support our bodies, help our infirmities, and [to use the language of our Church] “*prevent, accompany, and follow us*” through the whole. And yet in *all* moral, and in *many* natural actions, we are as free from the laws of *Calvinian* necessity as from those of the Great Mogul.

6. With regard to the families and kingdoms of this world, we assert that God’s providence either baffles, controls, or sets bounds to, the bad designs of the wicked ; whilst it has the principal hand in succeeding the good designs of the righteous, as often as they have any success : for *except the Lord keep the city*, as well as the watchman, *the watchman waketh but in vain*. And with respect to the course of nature, we believe that it is ordered by his unerring counsel. With a view to maintain order in the universe, his providential wisdom made admirable laws of attraction, repulsion, generation, fermentation, vegetation, and dissolution. And his providential power and watchfulness are, though without either labour or anxiety, continually engaged in conducting all things according to those laws : except when, on proper occasions, he suspends the influence of his own natural decrees ; and then fire may cease to burn :—iron to sink in water ;—and hungry lions to devour their helpless prey. Nay, at the beck of Omnipotence, a widow’s cruse of oil and barrel of meal shall be filled without the help of the olive-tree, and the formality of a growing harvest ;—a dry rod shall suddenly blossom, and a green fig-tree shall instantly be dried up ;—garments in daily use shall not wear out in forty years ;—a prophet shall live forty days without food ;—the liquid waves shall afford a solid walk to a believing apostle ;—a fish shall bring back the piece of money which it had swallowed—and water shall be turned into wine without the gradual process of vegetation.

If Mr. T. do us the justice to weigh these six observations upon the prodigious work which God’s Providence carries on in the moral, spiritual, and natural world, according to our doctrine : we hope he will no more intimate, that we *atheistically* deny, or *heretically* *defame*, that divine attribute.

To conclude : we exactly steer our course between *rigid* free willers, who suppose they are independent on God’s providence ; and *rigid* bound willers, who fancy they do nothing but what fate or God’s providence absolutely binds them to do. We equally detest the error of *Epicurus*, and that of Mr. *Toplady*. The former taught that God took no notice of sin ; the latter says, that God, by *efficacious*

permissions, and irresistible decrees, absolutely necessitates men to commit it. But we maintain, that although God never absolutely necessitated his creatures to sin; yet his Providence is remarkably employed about sin in all the above-described ways. And if Mr. Toplady will call us defamers of Divine Providence, and Atheists, because we dare not represent God, directly or indirectly, as the author of sin; we rejoice in so honourable a reproach, and humbly trust that this, as well as all manner of similar evil, is rashly said of us for righteousness sake.

SECTION XII.

Some Encouragements for those who, from a principle of Conscience, bear their testimony against the Antinomian doctrine of Calvinian Election, and the barbarous doctrine of Calvinian Reprobation.

I HUMBLY hope that I have in the preceding pages, contended for the truth of the Gospel, and the honour of God's perfections. My conscience bears me witness, that I have endeavoured to do it with the sincerity of a candid inquirer after truth; and I have not, knowingly, leaped over one material difficulty which Mr. T. has thrown in the way of the laborious divine, whose evangelical principles I vindicate. And now, judicious reader, as I have done my part, as a detector of the fallacies by which the modern doctrines of grace are "*kept upon their legs,*" let me prevail upon thee to do thy part as a judge, and to say if the *right leg* of Calvinism [i. e. the lawless election of an unscriptural grace] so draws thy admiration as to make thee overlook the deformity of the *left leg*, i. e. the absurd, unholy, sin-ensuring, hell-procuring, merciless, and unjust reprobation, which Mr. T. has attempted to vindicate. Shall thy reason, thy conscience, thy Bible—and [what is more than this] shall *all the perfections* of thy God, and the *veracity* of thy Saviour, be sacrificed on the altar of a *reprobation*, which none of the prophets, apostles, and early fathers ever heard of?—a barbarous *reprobation*, which heated *Augustine* drew from the horrible error of Manichean necessity, and clothed with some Scripture expressions detached from the context, and wrested from their original meaning?—a Pharisaic *reprobation*, which the Church of Rome took from him, and which some of our Reformers unhappily brought from that corrupted society into the Protestant churches?—In a word, a reprobation which disgraces Christianity, when that holy religion is considered as a system of evangelical doc-

trine, as much as our most enormous crimes disgrace it, when it is considered as a system of pure morality?—shall such a system of reprobation, I say, find a place in thy creed?—yea, among thy *doctrines of grace*? God forbid.

Dii meliora piis ! erroremque hostibus illum ! I hope better things of thy candour, good sense, and piety. If prejudice, human authority, and voluntary humility seduce *many* good men into a profound reverence for that stupendous dogma, be not carried away by their number, or biassed by their shouts. Remember that all Israel, and good Aaron at their head, danced once round the golden calf :—that deluded Solomon was seen bowing at the shrine of *Ashtarothe*, the abomination of the Sidonians :—that all our godly forefathers worshipped a consecrated wafer 400 years ago : that *all the world* wondered after the beast : and that God's chosen people went a whoring after their own inventions, and once sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils upon the altar of Moloch. Consider this, I say, and take courage : be not afraid to be “ pilloried in a preface, flogged at a pamphlet's tail,” and treated as a knave, a felon, or a blasphemer through the whole of the next Vindication of the *deified** decrees, which are commonly called *Calvinism*. This may be thy lot, if thou shouldst dare to bear thy plain testimony against the Antinomian idol of the day.

Nor say, that thou art not in Italy, or Portugal ; but in a Protestant land, a land of liberty—in England : for thou mightest meet with more mercy from *reprobating* priests in Popish Naples than in orthodox Geneva. Being some years ago in the former of those cities, among the fine buildings which I viewed, one peculiarly drew my attention. It was a towering monument several stories high, erected by the Jesuits in honour of the Virgin Mary, whose image stood on the top of the elegant structure. But what surprised me most, was an Italian inscription engraven upon a stone of the monument, to this purpose : “ Pope Benedict the XIVth grants a plenary indulgence to all those who shall honour this holy image, with privilege to deliver one soul out of purgatory every time they shall pay their respects to this immaculate mother.” While I copied this inscription in my pocket-book, and dropped to my fellow-traveller an innocent irony about the absurdity of this *Popish decree* ; two or three Priests passed by : they smelt out our heresy, looked displeased, but did not insult us. Mr. Wesley took, some years ago, a similar liberty with a literary monument erected in mystic Geneva, to

* Mr. T. calls them *The decrees of God*, and it is an axiom among the Calvinists, that “ *God's decrees are God himself.*”

the honour of *absolute reprobation*. He smiled at the severity of Calvinian bigotry ; and not without reason : since Popish bigotry kindly sends a soul out of *purgatory*, if you reverence the black image, which is pompously called the *immaculate Mother of God* : whereas Calvinian bigotry indirectly sends to *hell* all those who shall not bow to the doctrinal image, which she calls *Divine Sovereignty*, upon as good ground, as some ancient devotees called the appetite of *Bel [Baal]* and the *Dragon divine voracity*. He [Mr. Wesley] added to his smile the publication of an ironical reproof. A gentleman, who serves at the altar of *absolute reprobation*, caught him in the fact, and said something about “ *transmitting the criminal to Virginia or Maryland,* if not to Tyburn.*” But free wrath yielded to free grace. Calvinian mercy rejoiced over *Orthodox* judgment. Mr. Wesley is spared. The *Vindicator* “ of the doctrines of grace,” after “ *rapping his knuckles,*”—“ *pillorying*” him in a preface—and “ *flogging*” him again and again in two pamphlets, and in a huge book, with a tenderness peculiar to the *house of mercy* where Popish reprobation checks Protestant heresy ;—the *Vindicator* of Protestant reprobation, I say, has let the grey-headed heretic go with this gentle and civil reprimand : [page 10 :]—“ Had I publicly distorted and defamed the decrees of God :” [*should it not be, had I fairly held out to public view the absurdity of the imaginary decrees preached by Calvin ?*]—“ had I, moreover, advanced so many miles beyond boldness, as to lay those distortions and defamations at the door of another :” [*should it not be, had I, moreover, ironically asserted, that monstrous consequences necessarily flow from monstrous premises :*] “ bold as I am affirmed to be, I could never have looked up afterward. I should have thought every miscreant I met an *honest* man than myself. But Mr. John seems a perfect stranger to these feelings. His *murus aheneus*” [*his brassy hardness*] “ has been too long transferred from his conscience to his forehead. On the whole, &c. I had rather let the ancient offender pass unchastized, than soil my hands in the operation.” As Mr. Wesley is so kindly dismissed by Mr. Toplady, I must also dismiss thee, gentle reader, and leave thee to decide, which is most likely to convert thee to Calvinian reprobation, *Urbanitas* or *Logica Genevensis* ;—the courtesy of our opponents, or their arguments.

In the mean time, if thou desire to know how near Calvinian election comes to the truth, and what is the *reprobation* which the

*See Mr. Toplady's Letter to Mr. Wesley, p. 6.

Scriptures maintain, I refer thee to an *Essay on the partial election of grace, and on the impartial election of justice*, Vol. iii. p. 313.—A double essay this, that unfolds the difficulties in which prejudiced divines, and system-makers have, for these fourteen hundred years, involved the fundamental doctrine of election ; and, which, I flatter myself, will check party spirit, reconcile judicious Protestants to one another, and give some useful hints to more respectable divines, who, in happier days, will exert themselves in the *total* extirpation of the errors which disgrace *modern* Christianity.

THE
LAST CHECK
TO
ANTINOMIANISM.

A
POLEMICAL ESSAY

ON THE
TWIN DOCTRINES
OF
CHRISTIAN IMPERFECTION
AND A
DEATH PURGATORY.

Be ye perfect.—Every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master. If thou wilt be perfect, go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor. *Jesus Christ.*

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud. *St. Paul.*

Let no man deceive you, &c. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he (the Vine) is, so are we (the branches) in this world. *St. John.*

PREFACE.



Why the following Tract is called, *THE LAST CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM, and A POLEMICAL ESSAY.—Mr. Hill's Creed for Perfectionists.*—*A short Account of the Manner in which Souls are purged from the Remains of Sin, according to the Doctrine of the Heathens, the Romanists, and the Calvinists.—The PURGATORY recommended by the Church of England, and vindicated in this Book, is Christ's Blood, and a soul-purifying Faith.*

I CALL the following Essay *The last Check to Antinomianism*, because it properly continues and closes the preceding *Checks*. When a late Fellow of Clare-Hall, Cambridge, attacked the doctrine of *Sincere Obedience* which I defend in the *Checks*, he said with great truth, “*Sincere obedience, as a condition, will lead you unavoidably up to PERFECT obedience.*” What he urged as an argument against our views of the Gospel is one of the reasons by which we defend them, and perhaps the strongest of all: for our doctrine leads as naturally to holiness and perfect obedience, as that of our opponents does to sin and imperfection. If the streams of Mr. Hill's doctrine never stop, till they have carried men into a sea of *indwelling sin*, where he leaves them to struggle with waves of immorality, or with billows of corruption, all the days of their life; it is evident that our doctrine, which is the very reverse of his, must take us to a sea of *indwelling holiness*, where we calmly outride all the storms which Satan raised to destroy Job's perfection; and where all our pursuing corruptions are as much destroyed as the Egyptians were in the Red Sea.

Truth, like Moses's rod, is all of a piece; and so is the serpent which truth devours. Look at the tail of the error which we attack; and you will see the venomous, mortal sting of *indwelling sin*. Consider the but end of the rod, with which we defend ourselves

against that smooth, yet biting error ; and you will find the pearl of great price, the invaluable diamond of *Christian Perfection*. In the very nature of things, therefore, our long controversial warfare, must end in a close engagement for the preservation of the *sting*, or for the recovery of the *jewel*. If our adversaries can save *indwelling sin*, the deadly sting, Antinomianism, has won the day : but if we can rescue *Christian perfection*, the precious jewel, then will perfect Christianity again dare to show herself, without being attacked as a dangerous monster, or scoffed at as the base offspring of self-ignorance and Pharisaic pride. This remark on the *Antinomianism* of our opponents is founded upon the following arguments.

1. All those who represent *Christian believers* as *lawless*, first, by denying that *Christ's law* is a rule of judgment, which absolutely requires our own personal obedience ; secondly, by representing this *law* as a mere rule of life ; and thirdly, by insinuating that this rule of life is, after all, absolutely impracticable ; that a personal fulfilment of it is not expected from any believer ; that there never was a Christian who lived one day without breaking it ; and that believers shall be eternally saved, merely because Christ kept it for them :—all those, I say, who hold this Solifidian doctrine concerning *Christ's law*, are *Christian Antinomians* with a witness ; that is, they are *lawless Christians* in principle, if not in practice. Now all those who attack the doctrine of constant obedience, and Christian perfection, which we maintain, are under this threefold error concerning *Christ's law* ; and therefore they are all *Antinomians*, that is, *Christians lawless* in principle, though many of them, we are persuaded, are not so in practice ; the fear of God causing in them a happy inconsistency between their *legal* conduct and their *lawless* tenets.

2. If those who plead for the breaking of *Christ's law* by the necessary *indwelling* of a revengeful thought *only* for one week, or for one day, are barefaced Antinomians ; what shall we say of the men, who on various pretences, plead for the necessary *indwelling* of all manner of corruption, during the term of life ? Can it be said, with any propriety, that these men are free from the plague of *Antinomianism* ?

3. And lastly, when the reader comes to Section XVI. wherein I produce and answer the arguments by which the ministers of the *imperfect* Gospel defend the continuance of *indwelling sin* in all believers till death, he will find that their strongest reasons for this continuance, are the very same which the most lawless apostates, and the most daring renegadoes, daily produce, when they plead for their continuing in drunkenness, lying, fornication, and adultery : and if

these immoral Gossellers deserve the name of gross *Antinomians*: why should not the moral men, who hold their loose principles, and publicly recommend them as “doctrines of grace,” deserve the name of *refined Antinomians*? May not a silk-weaver, who softly works a piece of taffeta, be as justly called a *weaver* as a man who weaves the coarsest sackcloth?

Through the force of these observations, after weighing my subject in the balances of meditation and prayer for some months, I am come to these alarming conclusions: 1. There is no medium between pleading for the continuance of indwelling sin, and pleading for the continuance of heart Antinomianism. And 2. All who attack the doctrine of *evangelically sinless* perfection, deserve, *when they do it* (which I would hope is not often) the name of *advocates for sin*, better than the name of *Gospel ministers* and *preachers of righteousness*. I am conscious that this twofold conclusion wounds, in the tenderest part, several of my dear, mistaken brethren in the ministry, whom, on various accounts, I highly honour in the Lord. Nevertheless I am obliged in conscience to publish it, lest any of my readers, or any of those whom they warn, should be misled into Antinomianism through the mistakes of those popular preachers: for the interests of truth, the honour of Christ’s holy religion, and the welfare of precious souls are, and ought to be, to me and to every Christian, far dearer than the credit of some good, injudicious men, who inadvertently undermine the cause of godliness; thinking to do God service by stretching forth a *solifidian* hand to uphold the ark of Gospel truth. Thus much for the reasons which have engaged me to call this Essay *The last Check to Antinomianism*.

If the reader desires to know, why I call it also *A Polemical Essay*, he is informed that *Richard Hill, Esq.* (at the end of a pamphlet, entitled *Three Letters written to the Rev. J. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley,*) has published “*A Creed for Arminians and Perfectionists.*” The ten first articles of this Creed, which respect the *Arminians*, I have already answered in *The fictitious and genuine Creed*; and the following sheets contain my reply to the last article, which entirely refers to the *Perfectionists*.

That gentleman introduces the whole of his fictitious Creed by these lines: “*The following confession of faith, however shocking, not to say blasphemous, it may appear to the humble Christian, must inevitably be adopted, if not in express words, yet in substance, by every Arminian and Perfectionist whatsoever; though the last article of it chiefly concerns such as are ordained Ministers of the Church of England.*”—The last article, which in the Creed I answer here, runs thus:

“ Though I have solemnly subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and have affirmed that I believe them from my heart, yet I think our Reformers were profoundly ignorant of true Christianity, when they declared in the ninth Article, that “ *the infection of nature does remain in them which are regenerate;*” and in the fifteenth, that “ *ALL WE the rest (Christ only excepted) although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things, and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” This I totally deny, because it cuts up root and branch my favourite doctrine of *Perfection*: and therefore let Peter, Paul, James, and John, say what they will, and let the Reformers and Martyrs join their siren song, their eyes were at best but half opened (for want of a little *Foundry* eye-salve;) therefore I cannot look upon them as adult believers in Jesus Christ.

J. F.

J. W.

W. S.”

These initial letters probably stand for *John Fletcher, John Wesley, and Walter Sellon*. As Mr. Hill seems to level his witty creed at me *first*, I shall *first* make my observations upon it. The *van* without the *main body* and the *rear*, may perhaps make a proper stand against that gentleman’s mistake:—A dangerous mistake this, which is inseparably connected with the doctrine of a *purgatory* little better than that of the Papists; it being evident, that, if we cannot be purged from the remains of sin in this life, we must be purged from them in death, or after death; or we must be banished from God’s presence; for reason and Scripture jointly depose, that *nothing unholy or unclean shall enter into the heavenly Jerusalem*.

If we understand by *Purgatory*, the manner in which souls still polluted with the remains of sin, are, or may be, *purged* from these remains, that they may see a holy God, and dwell with him for ever; the question, *Which is the true Purgatory?* is by no means frivolous: for it is the grand inquiry, *How shall I be eternally saved?* proposed in different expressions.

There are four opinions concerning *Purgatory*, or the *purgation* of souls from the remains of sin. The wildest is that of the heathens, who supposed, “ That the souls, who depart this life with some moral filth cleaving to them, are purified by being hanged out to sharp, cutting winds; by being plunged into a deep, impetuous whirlpool; or by being thrown into a refining fire in some Tartarean region:” witness these lines of *Virgil*:

—Alie panduntur inanes
 Suspensæ ad ventos : aliis sub gurgite vasto
 Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.

The second opinion is that of the *Romanists*, who teach, that such souls are completely sanctified by the virtue of Christ's blood, and the sharp operation of a penal temporary fire in the suburbs of hell. The third opinion is that of the *Calvinists*, who think, that the stroke of death must absolutely be joined with Christ's blood and Spirit, and with our faith, to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, and to kill the inbred *man of sin*.

The last sentiment is that of the Church of England, which teaches that there is no other Purgatory but "Christ's blood"—"Steadfast, perfect faith"—and "The inspiration of God's holy Spirit cleansing the thoughts of our hearts, that we may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."—"The only *Purgatory*, wherein we must trust to be saved [says she] is the death and blood of Christ, which, if we apprehend with a *true and steadfast faith*, called soon after '*a perfect faith*,' it purgeth and cleanseth us from ALL our sins. The blood of Christ, says St. John, hath cleansed us from all sin. The blood of Christ, says St. Paul, hath purged our consciences from dead works to serve the living God, &c. This then is the *Purgatory* wherein all Christian men put their trust and confidence."—*Hornily on Prayer, Part iii.*

Nor is this doctrine of *Purgatory* peculiar to the Church of England ; for the unprejudiced Puritans themselves maintained it in the last century. Mr. R. Alleine, in his excellent treatise on *Godly Fear*, printed in London, 1674, says, page 161, "The Lord Christ is sometimes resembled to a *refining fire*, &c. He is a *refiner's fire*,—and he shall sit as a *refiner and purifier of silver*. He shall purify, he shall save his people from their sins, yet so as by fire. God has his purgatory as well as his hell ; though not according to that *Popish dream*, a purgatory after this life."—And I beg leave to add ;—though not according to that *Calvinian dream*, ■ purgatory when we leave this life—a purgatory in the article of death.

The scriptural doctrine of *Purgatory* is vindicated, and the new-fangled doctrine of a *Death Purgatory* is exploded, in the following pages : wherein I endeavour both to defend the *glorious liberty of the children of God*, and to attack the false liberty of those, who, while they promise liberty to others in Christ, are themselves [doctrinally at least] the *servants of corruption* ; pleading hard for the indwelling of sin in our hearts so long as we live ; and thinking it almost "*blasphemous*" to assert, that *Christ's blood*, fully applied by the Spirit, through

a steadfast faith, can radically *cleanse us from all sin*, without the least assistance from the arrows or sweats of death.

Reader, I plead for the most precious liberty in the world, *heart liberty*:—for liberty from the most galling of all yokes, the yoke of *heart corruption*:—let not thy prejudices turn a deaf ear to the important plea. If thou candidly, believingly, and practically receive *the truth as it is in Jesus*, it shall make thee free, and thou shalt be free indeed. Then, instead of shouting, “Indwelling sin and death purgatory,” thou wilt *fulfil the law of liberty*: shouting, “Christ and Christian liberty for ever.” In the mean time, when thou makest intercession for thy well-wishers, remember the author of this *Essay*, and pray that he may plead on his knees against the remains of sin, far more earnestly than he does in these sheets against Mr. Hill’s mistakes.

THE
LAST CHECK
TO
ANTINOMIANISM.

SECTION I.

The best way of opposing the Doctrines of CHRISTIAN IMPERFECTION and a DEATH PURGATORY, is to place the doctrine of CHRISTIAN PERFECTION in a proper light.—CHRISTIAN PERFECTION is the maturity of a believer's grace under the Gospel of Christ.—It is absurd to suppose that this perfection is sinless, if it be measured by our CREATOR's law of paradisiacal Innocence and Obedience.—Established believers fulfil our REDEEMER's evangelical law of liberty. Whilst they fulfil it they do not transgress it, that is, [EVANGELICALLY speaking] they DO NOT SIN.

MOST of the controversies which arise between men who fear God, spring from the hurry with which some of them find fault with what they have not yet examined, and speak evil of what they do not understand. Why does Mr. Hill, at the head of the Calvinists, attack the doctrine of *Christian Perfection* which we contend for? Is it because he and they are sworn enemies to righteousness, and zealous protectors of iniquity? Not at all. The grand reason, next to their Calvinian prejudices, is their inattention to the question, and to the arguments by which our sentiments are supported. Notwithstanding the manner in which that gentleman has treated me and my friends in his controversial heats, I still entertain so good an opinion of him as to think, that if he understood our doctrine, he would no more pour contempt upon it than upon the Oracles of God. I shall therefore endeavour to rectify his ideas of the glorious Christian liberty which we press after. If producing *light* is the best method of opposing *darkness*, setting the doctrine of *Christian Perfection* in a proper point of view will be the best means of opposing the doc-

trines of *Christian imperfection*, and of *death purgatory*. Begin we then by taking a view of our *Jerusalem* and her perfection: and when we shall have marked her bulwarks, and cleared the ground between her towers and Mr. Hill's battery, we shall march up to it, and see whether his arguments have the solidity of brass, or only the showy appearance of wooden artillery, painted and mounted like brazen ordnance.

Christian Perfection! Why should the harmless phrase offend us? — *Perfection!* Why should that lovely word frighten us? Is it not common and plain? Did not Cicero speak intelligibly, when he called accomplished philosophers “*perfectos philosophos*,” and an excellent orator “*perfectum oratorem*?” Did Ovid expose his reputation when he said, that “*Chiron perfected Achilles in music*,”* “or taught him to play upon the lute to perfection?” And does Mr. Hill think it wrong to observe that fruit grown to maturity is in its perfection? We, whom that gentleman calls *perfectionists*, use the word *perfection*† exactly in the same sense; giving that name to the maturity of grace peculiar to established believers under their respective dispensations; and if this be an error, we are led into it by the Sacred Writers, who use the word *perfection* as well as we.

The word *predestinate* occurs but four times in all the Scriptures, and the word *predestination* not once; and yet, Mr. Hill would justly exclaim against us, if we showed our wit by calling for “*■ little Foundry*” or *Tabernacle* “*eye-salve*,” to help us to see the word *predestination* once in all the Bible. Not so the word *perfection*: it occurs with its derivatives as frequently as most words in the Scriptures; and not seldom in the very same sense in which we take it. Nevertheless we do not lay an undue stress upon the expression; and if we thought that our condescension would answer any

* *Phillyrides puerum cithara perfecit Achillem.*

† The word *perfection* comes from the Latin *perficio*, to perfect, to finish, to accomplish; it exactly answers to the words *תָּמַם*, and *τελειωω*, generally used in the Old and New Testaments. Nor can their derivatives be more literally and exactly rendered than by *perfect* and *perfection*. If our translators render sometimes the word *תָּמַם*, by *upright* and *sincere*, or by *sincerity* and *integrity*, it is because they know that these expressions, like the original word, admit of a great latitude. Thus Columel calls wood that has no rotten part, and is perfectly sound, *lignum SINCERUM*: and Horace says, that a sweet cask, which has no bad smell of any sort, is *vas SINCERUM*. Thus also Cicero calls purity of diction, which is perfectly free from faults against grammar, *INTEGRITAS sermonis*: Plautus says, that a pure, undefiled virgin, is *filia INTEGRA*. And our translators call the perfectly pure milk of God's word, *The SINCERE milk of the word*: 1 Peter ii. 2. If therefore the words *sincerity* and *integrity* are taken in their full latitude, they convey the fullest meaning of *תָּמַם* and *τελειότης*, i. e. *perfection*.

good end, we would entirely give up that harmless and significant word. But if it is expedient to retain the *unscriptural* word *Trinity*, because it is a kind of watch-word, by which we frequently discover the secret opposers of the mysterious distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the Divine Unity ; how much more proper is it not to renounce the *Scriptural* word *Perfection*, by which the dispirited spies, who bring an evil report upon the good land of holiness, are often detected ?—Add to this, that the following declaration of our Lord does not permit us to renounce either the *word* or the *thing*, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father*. Now the words of my motto, *Be ye perfect*, &c. being Christ's own words, we dare no more be ashamed of them, than we dare desire him to be ashamed of us in the great day. Thus much for the word *perfection*.

Again : we give the name of *Christian Perfection* to that maturity of grace and holiness, which established, adult believers, attain to under the *Christian* dispensation : and thus we distinguish that maturity of grace, both from the ripeness of *grace* which belongs to the dispensation of the *Jews* below us, and from the ripeness of *glory* which belongs to departed saints above us. Hence it appears, that by *Christian Perfection* we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the *Christian church militant*.

In other words, *Christian Perfection* is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars, *Perfect repentance*, *Perfect faith*, *Perfect humility*, *Perfect meekness*, *Perfect self-denial*, *Perfect resignation*, *Perfect hope*, *Perfect charity* for our visible enemies, as well as for our earthly relations ;—and above all, *Perfect love* for our invisible God, through the explicit knowledge of our Mediator Jesus Christ. And as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, as *Jupiter* is by his satellites, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase *Perfect love*, instead of the word *perfection* ; understanding by it the pure love of God, shed abroad in the hearts of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fulness of the *Christian dispensation*.

Should Mr. Hill ask if the *Christian Perfection*, which we contend for is a *sinless* perfection, we reply, *Sin is the transgression of a divine law*, and man may be considered either as being under the *anti-evangelical*, *Christless*, *remediless* law of our Creator ; or as being under the *evangelical*, *mediatorial*, *remedying* law of our Redeemer ; and the question must be answered according to the nature of these two laws.

With respect to the *first*, that is, the *Adamic, Christless* law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection, we utterly renounce the doctrine of *sinless perfection*, for three reasons: 1. We are conceived and born in a state of sinful degeneracy, whereby *that* law is already virtually broken. 2. Our mental and bodily powers are so enfeebled, that we cannot help actually breaking *that* law in numberless instances, even after our *full* conversion. And 3. when once we have broken *that* law, it considers us as transgressors for ever: nor can it any more pronounce us *sinless*, than the rigorous law which condemns ■ man to be hanged for murder can absolve ■ murderer, let his repentance and faith be ever so *perfect*. Therefore, I repeat it, with respect to the *Christless* law of paradisiacal obedience, we entirely disclaim *sinless* perfection; and, improperly speaking, we say with Luther, "*In every good work the just man sinneth*:" that is, he more or less transgresses the law of paradisiacal innocence, by not thinking so deeply, not speaking so gracefully, not acting so properly, not obeying so vigorously as he would do, if he were still endowed with original perfection, and paradisiacal powers. Nor do we, *in the same sense*, scruple to say with bishop Latimer, "*He [Christ] saved us, not that we should be without sin; that no sin should be left in our hearts: no, he saved us not so. For all manner of imperfections remain in us, yea, in the best of us: so that if God should enter into judgment with us [according to the Christless law given to Adam before the fall] we should be damned. For there neither is nor was any man born into this world, who could say, I am clean from sin, [I fulfil the Adamic law of innocence] except Jesus Christ.*" And *in that sense*, we have all reason to pray with David, *Cleanse thou me from my secret faults; for if thou wilt mark what is done amiss, Lord, who may abide it?*—If thou wilt judge us according to the law of paradisiacal perfection, *what man living shall be justified in thy sight?* But Christ has so completely fulfilled our Creator's paradisiacal law of innocence, which allows neither of repentance nor of renewed obedience, that we shall not be judged by *that* law; but by a law adapted to our present state and circumstances, a milder law, called *the law of Christ*, i. e. the Mediator's law, which is, like himself, *full of evangelical grace and truth*.

To the many arguments which I have advanced in the *Checks* in defence of *this* law, I shall add one more, taken from Heb. vii. 12; *the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*. From these words I conclude, that if the law under which the Jews were, was of necessity changed, when God substituted the priesthood of Christ for that of Aaron; much more was the Adamic law of

paradisiacal innocence of necessity changed, when God gave to Adam by promise the *Bruiser of the serpent's head*, the *High-priest after the order of Melchisedec*. For if a change in the external priesthood of necessity implied a change of the *Mosaic law*; how much more did the institution of the *priesthood* itself necessarily imply a change of the *Adamic law*, which was given without any mediating priest!

If Mr. Hill, therefore, will do our doctrine justice, we entreat him to consider, that *we are not without law to God*, nor yet under a *Christless law* with Adam; but under a law to Christ, that is, under the law of our royal Priest, the evangelical law of liberty:—a more gracious law this, which allows a sincere repentance, and is fulfilled by loving faith. Now as we shall be judged by this law of liberty, we maintain not only that it *may*, but also that it *must*, be kept; and that it is actually kept by established Christians, according to the last and fullest edition of it, which is that of the New Testament. Nor do we think it “*shocking*” to hear an adult believer say, *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law [of innocence, or the letter of the Mosaic law] could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be [evangelically] fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 2, &c.

Reason and Scripture seem to us to confirm this doctrine: for we think it far less absurd to say, that the king and parliament make laws which no Englishman can possibly keep; than to suppose, that Christ and his apostles have given us precepts which no Christian is able to observe: and St. James assures us, the evangelical law of Christ and liberty is that by which we shall stand or fall in judgment: *So speak ye, and so do*, says he, *as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty*, James ii. 12. We find the Christian edition of that law in all parts of the New Testament, but especially in our Lord's sermon on the mount, and in St. Paul's description of charity.—We are persuaded with St. John and St. Paul, that as *sin is in transgression*, so penitential, pure love is the fulfilling of that evangelical law: and therefore do not scruple to say with the apostle, that *he who loveth another hath fulfilled it*;—and that *there is no occasion of stumbling*, i. e. no sin, in him; fulfilling, the law of Christ and sinning (in the evangelical sense of the word) being as diametrically opposite to each other, as *obeying* and *disobeying*—working righteousness and working iniquity.

We do not doubt but, as a reasonable, loving father never requires of his child, who is only ten years old, the work of one who is thirty

years of age ; so our heavenly Father never expects of us, in our debilitated state, the obedience of immortal Adam in paradise, or the uninterrupted worship of sleepless angels in heaven. We are persuaded therefore, that for Christ's sake, he is pleased with an humble obedience to our *present* light, and a loving exertion of our *present* powers ; accepting our Gospel services according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. Nor dare we call that loving exertion of our present power *sin*, lest by so doing we should contradict the Scriptures, confound *sin* and *obedience*, and remove all the landmarks which divide the devil's common from the Lord's vineyard. And, if at any time we have exaggerated the difficulty of keeping Christ's law, we acknowledge our error, and confess, that by this mean we have Calvinistically traduced the equity of our gracious God, and inadvertently encouraged Antinomian delusions.

To conclude : We believe, that although adult, established believers, or perfect Christians, may admit of many *involuntary* mistakes, errors, and faults ; and of many *involuntary* improprieties of speech and behaviour ; yet, so long as their *will* is bent upon doing God's will ;—so long as they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit ;—so long as they fulfil the law of liberty by pure love, they do not *sin* according to the Gospel : because (evangelically speaking) *sin* is the transgression, and *love* is the fulfilling of that law. Far then from thinking that there is the least absurdity in saying daily, *Vouchsafe to keep me this day without sin*, we doubt not but in the believers, who *who walk in the light as Christ is in the light*, that deep petition is answered ; the righteousness of the law, which they are under, is fulfilled ; and of consequence, an evangelically *sinless* perfection is daily experienced. I say evangelically *sinless*, because, without the word evangelically, the phrase *sinless perfection* gives an occasion of cavilling to those who seek it, as Mr. Wesley intimates in the following quotation, which is taken from his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, page 60. “ To explain myself a little farther on this head : 1. Not only *sin*, properly so called, that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law, but *sin*, improperly so called, that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown, needs the atoning blood.—2. I believe there is no such perfection in this life, as excludes these *involuntary* transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality—4. Therefore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself.—3. I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions.

—5. Such transgressions you may call *sins*, if you please ; I do not, for the reasons above mentioned.”

SECTION II.

Pious Calvinists have had, AT TIMES, nearly the same Views of Christian Perfection which we have. They dissent from us chiefly because they confound the anti-evangelical Law of Innocence, and the evangelical Law of Liberty, Adamic and Christian Perfection ; and because they do not consider that Christian Perfection, falling infinitely short of God's ABSOLUTE Perfection, admits of a daily GROWTH.

If it were necessary, we could support the doctrine of Christian Perfection stated in the preceding pages, by almost numberless quotations from the most judicious and pious Calvinists. The sentiments of two or three of them may edify the reader, and give him a specimen of the candour with which they have written upon the subject, when a spring-tide of evangelical truth raised them above the shallows of their system.

“*If love be sincere,*” says pious Mr. Henry, “it is accepted as the fulfilling of the law. Surely we serve a good Master, that has summed up all our duty in one word, and that a short word, and a sweet word, *Love*, the beauty and harmony of the universe. Loving and being loved is all the pleasure, joy, and happiness of an intelligent being. God is love, and love is his image upon the soul. Where it is, the soul is well moulded, and the heart fitted for every good work.” *Henry's Exposition on Rom. xiii. 10.*—Again : “It is well for us that, by virtue of the covenant of grace, upon the score of Christ's righteousness, *sincerity* is accepted as our Gospel perfection.” *Henry on Gen. vi. 2.*—[See the note on the word *perfection*, Sect. I.]

Pious Bishop Hopkins is exactly of the same mind. “Consider,” says he, “for your encouragement, that this is not so much the absolute and legal perfection of the work, as the [evangelical] perfection of the worker, that is, the perfection of the heart, which is looked at and rewarded by God. There is a two-fold perfection, the perfection of the work, and that of the workman. The perfection of the work is, when the work does so exactly and strictly answer the holy law of God, that there is no irregularity in it. The perfection of the workman is nothing but inward sincerity and uprightness of the heart towards God, which may be where there are many imperfections and defects intermingled. If God accepted and rewarded no work, but what is absolutely perfect in respect of the law ; this would take off

the wheels of all endeavours, for our obedience falls far short of legal perfection in this life ;” [*the Adamic law making no allowance for the weakness of fallen man.*] “ But we do not stand upon such terms as these with our God. It is not so much what our works are as what our heart is, that God looks at and will reward. Yet know, also, that if our hearts are perfect and sincere, we shall endeavour, to the utmost of our power, that our works may be perfect according to the strictness of the law.”

Archbishop *Leighton* pleads also for the perfection we maintain, and by Calvinistically supposing that *perseverance* is necessary to Christian perfection, he extols it above Adam’s paradisiacal perfection. Take his own words abridged : “ By obedience sanctification is here intimated : it signifies both habitual and actual obedience, renovation of the heart, and conformity to the divine will : the mind is illuminated by the Holy Ghost to know and believe the Divine will ; yea, this faith is the great and chief part of this obedience, Rom. i. 8. The truth of the doctrine is impressed upon the mind, hence flows out pleasant obedience and full [*he does not say of sin, but*] of love : hence all the affections, and the whole body, with its members, learn to give ■ willing obedience, and submit to God ; whereas before they resisted him, being under the standard of Satan. This obedience, though imperfect [*when it is measured by the Christless law of paradisiacal innocence*] yet has a certain, if I may so say, imperfect perfection. [*It is not legally but evangelically perfect.*] It is universal [*or perfect*] three manner of ways ; 1. In the subject :—It is not in the tongue alone, or in the hand, &c. but has its root in the heart.—2. In the object :—It embraces the whole law, &c. It accounts no command little, which is from God, because he is great and highly esteemed : no command hard, though contrary to the flesh, because all things are easy to love ; there is the same authority in all, as St. James divinely argues. And this authority is the golden chain to all the commandments [*of the law of liberty preached by St. James*] which, if broke in any link, falls to pieces.—3. In the duration, the whole man is subjected to the whole law, and that constantly. That this threefold perfection of obedience is not ■ picture drawn by fancy, is evident in David, Psalm cxix.” *Archbishop Leighton’s Com. on St. Peter, page 15.*

That learned prelate, as a pious man, could not but be a perfectionist ; though, as a Calvinist, he frequently spoke the language of the imperfectionists. Take one more quotation, where he grants all that we contend for. “ To be subject to him [*God*] is truer happiness than to command the whole world. Pure love reckons thus, though

no farther reward were to follow ; obedience to God [the perfection of his creature, and its very happiness] carries its full recompense in its own bosom. Yea, love delights most in the hardest services, &c. It is love to him, indeed, to love the labour of love, and the service of it : and that not so much because it leads to rest, and ends in it, but because it is service to him whom we love : yea, that labour is in itself a rest : it is so natural and sweet to a soul that loves. As the revolution of the heavens, which is a motion in rest, and rest in motion, changes not place, though running still, so the motion of love is truly heavenly, and circular still in God ; beginning in him, and ending in him ; and so not ending, but moving still without weariness, &c. According as the love is, so is the soul : it is made like to, yea, it is made one with that which it loves, &c. By the love of God it is made divine, is one with him, &c. Now, though fallen from this, we are invited to it ; though degenerated and accursed in our sinful nature, yet we are renewed in Christ, and this commandment is renewed in him, and a new way of fulfilling it [*even the way of faith in our Redeemer*] is pointed out." *Select Works of Archb. Leighton*, page 461.—Where has Mr. Wesley ever exceeded this high description of Christian perfection ?

I grant that this pious prelate frequently confounds our celestial perfection of glory with our progressive perfection of grace, and on that account supposes that the latter is not attainable in this life : but even then he exhorts us to quit ourselves like sincere perfectionists. "Though men," says he, "fall short of their aim, yet it is good to aim high : they shall shoot so much the higher, though not full so high as they aim. Thus we ought to be setting the state of perfection in our eye, resolving* not to rest content below that, and to come as near it as we can, even before we come at it. Phil. iii. 11, 12. This is to act as one that has such a hope, such a state in view, and is still advancing towards it." *Ibid.* page 184. The mistake of the Archbishop will be particularly pointed out, where I shall show the true meaning of Phil. iii. 11—the passage, behind which he skreens the remains of his Calvinian prejudices.

* I think I have said in one of the *Checks*, that Archbishop Leighton doubted whether those, who do not sincerely aspire after perfection, have saving grace : that doubt, (if I now remember right) is Mr. *Alleine's*, though this quotation from the Archbishop shows, that he was not far from *Alleine's* sentiment, if he was not in it. Pious Dr. *Doddridge* is explicit on this head, "To allow yourself," said he, "deliberately to sit down satisfied with any imperfect attainments in religion, and to look upon a more confirmed and improved state of it as what you do not desire, nay, as what you secretly resolve that you will not pursue, is one of the most fatal signs we can well imagine, that you are an entire stranger to the first principles of it."—*Doddridge's Rise and Prog. Chap. xx.*

By the preceding quotations, and by two more from the Rev. Messrs. *Whitefield* and *Romaine*, which the reader will find at the end of Sect. IX. it appears, that pious Calvinists come at times very near the doctrine of Christian perfection ; and if they do not constantly enforce it, it is, we apprehend, chiefly for the following reasons.

1. They generally confound the *Christless law of innocence* with the *evangelical law of Christ* ; and because the former cannot be fulfilled by believers, they conclude that pure obedience to the latter is impracticable.

2. They confound *peccability* with *sin* ;—the power of sinning, with the actual cause of that power. And so long as they suppose, that a bare natural capacity to sin is either original sin, or an evil propensity, we do not wonder at their believing that original sin, or evil propensities, must remain in our hearts till death removes us from this tempting world. But on what argument do they found this notion ? Did not God create angels and man peccable ? Or in other terms, Did he not endue them with a power to sin, or not to sin, to disobey or obey as they pleased ? Did not the event show that they had this tremendous power ? But would it not be “ blasphemous ” to assert, that God created them full of original sin, and of evil propensities ?—If an adult believer yields to temptation, and falls into sin as our first parents did, is it a proof that he never was cleansed from inbred sin ?—If sinning necessarily demonstrates that the heart was always teeming with depravity, will it not follow that *Adam* and *Eve* were tainted with sin *before* their will began to decline from original righteousness ? Is it not, however, indubitable from the nature of God, from Scripture, and from sad experience, that after having been created in God’s *sinless* image, and holy likeness, our first parents, as well as some angels, were *drawn away of their own self-conceited lust*, and became evil by the power of their own free agency ?—Is it reasonable to think that the most holy Christians, so long as the day of their visitation and probation lasts in this tempting wilderness, are in that respect above *Adam* in paradise, and above angels in heaven ? And may we not conclude, that as *Satan* and *Adam* insensibly fell into sin, the one from the height of his celestial perfection, and the other from the summit of his paradisiacal excellence, without any previous bias inclining him to corruption : so may those believers, whose hearts have been completely purified by faith, gradually depart from the faith, and fall so low as to account the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing ?

3. The prejudices of our opponents are increased by their confounding Adamic* and Christian perfection; two perfections these, which are as distinct as the Garden of Eden and the Christian Church. Adamic perfection came from God our Creator in Paradise, before any trial of Adam's faithful obedience: and Christian perfection comes from God our Redeemer and Sanctifier, in the Christian Church, after a severe trial of the obedience of faith. Adamic perfection might be lost by doing despite to the preserving love of God our Creator; and Christian perfection may be lost by doing despite to the *redeeming* love of God our Saviour. Adamic perfection extended to the whole man: his body was perfectly sound in all its parts, and his soul in all its powers. But Christian perfection extends chiefly to the *will*, which is the capital, *moral* power of the soul; leaving the understanding ignorant of ten thousand things, and the body *dead because of sin*.

4. Another capital mistake lies at the root of the opposition which our Calvinian brethren make against Christian perfection. They imagine that, upon our principles, the grace of an adult Christian, is like the body of an adult man, which can grow no more. But this consequence flows from their fancy, and not from our doctrine. We exhort the strongest believers to *grow up to Christ in all things*: asserting that there is no holiness, and no happiness in heaven [much less upon earth] which does not admit of a growth, *except* the holiness and happiness of God himself; because, in the very nature of things, a being absolutely perfect, and in every sense infinite, can never have any thing added to him. But infinite additions may be made to beings every way finite, such as glorified saints and holy angels are.

Hence it appears, that the comparison which we make between the ripeness of ■ fruit, and the maturity of a believer's grace, cannot be

* Between Adamic and Christian perfection, we place the gracious *innocence* of little children. They are not only full of peccability like Adam, but debilitated in all their animal and rational faculties, and of consequence, fit to become an easy prey to every temptation, through the *weakness* of their reason, and the *corruption* of their concupiscible and irascible powers. Nevertheless, till they begin personally to prefer moral evil to moral good, we may consider them as evangelically or graciously innocent. I say *graciously innocent*, because if we consider them in the seed of fallen Adam, we find them naturally *children of wrath*, and under the curse; but if we consider them in the *seed of the woman*, which was promised to Adam and to his posterity, we find them *graciously* placed in a state of redemption, and evangelical salvation. For the *free gift*, which is *come upon all men to justification*, belongs first to them, Christ having sanctified infancy first. And therefore we do not scruple to say, after our Lord, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*. Now the kingdom of heaven is not of sinners *as sinners*; but of little children, as being *innocent* through the free gift; or of adults, as being *penitent*, that is, turned from their sins to Christ.

carried into an exact parallel.—For a perfect Christian grows far more than a feeble believer, whose growth is still obstructed by the shady thorns of sin, and by the draining suckers of iniquity.—Besides, a fruit which is come to its perfection, instead of growing, falls and decays : whereas ■ *babe in Christ* is called to grow till he becomes a perfect Christian ;—a perfect Christian, till he becomes a disembodied spirit ;—a disembodied spirit, till he reaches the perfection of a *saint glorified in body and soul* ;—and such a saint, till he has fathomed the infinite depths of divine perfection, that is, to all eternity. For if we go on *from faith to faith*, and are spiritually changed *from glory to glory*, by beholding God *darkly through a glass* on earth ; much more shall we experience improving changes, when we shall see *Him as he is*, and behold him *face to face* in various, numberless, and still brighter discoveries of himself in heaven. If Mr. Hill did but consider this, he would no more suppose that *Christian perfection* is the Pharisaic rickets, which put a stop to the growth of believers, and turn them into “temporary monsters.” Again ;

Does a well-meant mistake defile the conscience ?—You inadvertently encourage idleness and drunkenness, by kindly relieving an idle drunken beggar, who imposes upon your charity by plausible lies : is this loving error a sin ?—A blundering apothecary sends you arsenic for allum ; you use it as allum, and poison your child ; but are you a murderer if you give the fatal dose in love ?—Suppose the tempter had secretly mixed some of the forbidden fruit, with other fruits that Eve had lawfully gathered for use ; would she have sinned if she had inadvertently eaten of it, and given a share to her husband ?—After humbly confessing and deploring her undesigned error, her *secret* fault, her *accidental* offence, her *involuntary* trespass ; would she not have been as innocent as ever ?—I go farther still, and ask : may not a man who holds many *right* opinions, be a *perfect* lover of the world ? And by a parity of reason, may not a man who holds many *wrong* opinions be a perfect lover of God ? Have not some Calvinists died with their hearts overflowing with perfect love, and their heads full of the notion, that God set his everlasting, absolute hatred upon myriads of men before the foundation of the world ?—Nay, is it not even possible, that a man whose heart is renewed in love, should, through *mistaken* humility, or through *weakness of understanding*, oppose the name of *Christian perfection*, when he desires, and perhaps enjoys the *thing* ?

Once more : does not St. Paul’s rule hold in *spirituals* as well as in *temporals* : *It is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not* ? Does our Lord actually require more

of believers than they can *actually* do through his grace. And when they do it to the best of their power, does he not see some *perfection* in their works, insignificant as those works may be?—Remove this immense heap of stones, says an indulgent father to his children; and be diligent according to your strength. While the eldest, a strong man, removes rocks, the youngest, a little child, is as cheerfully busy as any of the rest, in carrying sands and pebbles. Now, may not his *childlike* obedience be as excellent in its degree, and of consequence, as acceptable to his parent, as the *manly* obedience of his eldest brother?—Nay, though he does next to nothing, may not his endeavours, if they are more cordial, excite a smile of *superior* approbation of his loving Father, who looks at the disposition of the heart more than at the appearance of the work? Had the believers of *Sardis* cordially laid out *all* their talents, would our Lord have complained that he did not *find their works perfect before God*? Rev. iii. 2. And was it not according to this rule of perfection, that Christ testified, the poor widow, who had given but *two mites*, had nevertheless cast more into the treasury than all the rich, *though they had cast in much*: because our Lord himself being judge, she had *given all that she had*? Now could she give, or did God require, more than her *all*? And when she thus heartily gave her *all*, did she not do (evangelically speaking) a perfect *work*, according to her dispensation and circumstances?

We flatter ourselves, that if these scriptural observations, and rational queries, do not remove Mr. *Hill's* prejudice, they will at least make way for a more candid perusal of the following pages.

SECTION III.

Several Objections raised against our Doctrine are solved merely by considering the nature of Christian Perfection.—It is absurd to say, that all our Christian Perfection is in the person of Christ.

I REPEAT it, if our *pious* opponents decry the doctrine of *Christian Perfection*, it is chiefly through misapprehension; it being as natural for *pious* men to recommend exalted piety, as for covetous persons to extol great riches. And this misapprehension frequently springs from their inattention to the *nature* of Christian perfection. To prove it, I need only oppose our *definition* of Christian perfection to the *objections* which are most commonly raised against our doctrine,

I. "Your doctrine of perfection leads to pride,"—Impossible! if Christian perfection is "*perfect humility*."

II. "It exalts believers; but it is only to the state of the vain-glorious Pharisee."—Impossible! If our perfection is "*perfect humility*," it makes us sink deeper into the state of the humble, justified publican.

III. "It fills men with the conceit of their own excellence, and makes them say to a weak brother, *Stand by, I am holier than thou*."—Impossible again! We do not preach *Pharisaic*, but *Christian perfection*, which consists in "*perfect poverty of spirit*," and in that "*perfect charity*," which vaunteth not itself, honours all men, and bears with the infirmities of the weak!

IV. "It sets repentance aside."—Impossible! for it is "*perfect repentance*."

V. "It will make us slight Christ."—More and more improbable! How can "*perfect faith*" in Christ make us slight Christ? Could it be more absurd to say, that the perfect love of God will make us despise God?

VI. "It will supersede the use of mortification and watchfulness; for, if sin be dead, what need have we to mortify it, and to watch against it?"

This objection has some plausibility; I shall therefore answer it various ways. 1. If Adam, in his state of paradisiacal perfection, needed perfect watchfulness and perfect mortification, how much more do we need them, who find the tree of knowledge of good and evil planted, not only in the midst of our gardens, but in the midst of our houses, markets, and churches?—2. When we are delivered from sin, are we delivered from peccability and temptation? When the inward man of sin is dead, is the devil dead? Is the corruption that is in the world destroyed? And have we not still our five senses, and our appetites, to keep with all diligence, as well as our hearts, that the tempter may not enter into us, or that we may not enter into his temptations?—Lastly, Jesus Christ, as son of Mary, was a perfect man. But how was he kept so to the end?—Was it not by keeping his mouth with a bridle, while the ungodly were in his sight, and by guarding all his senses with perfect assiduity, that the wicked one might not touch them to his hurt? And if Christ our head kept his human perfection only through watchfulness and constant self-denial; is it not absurd to suppose, that his perfect members can keep their perfection without treading in his steps.

VII. Another objection probably stands in Mr. Hill's way: it runs thus: "Your doctrine of perfection makes it needless for perfect

Christians to say the Lord's Prayer; for if God vouchsafes to *keep us this day without sin*, we shall have no need to pray at night that God would *forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*"

We answer, 1. Though a perfect Christian does not trespass voluntarily, and break the law of love, yet he daily breaks the law of Adamic perfection, through the imperfection of his bodily and mental powers: and he has frequently a deeper sense of *these involuntary trespasses*, than many weak believers have of their voluntary breaches of the moral law.—2. Although a perfect Christian has ■ witness that his sins are now forgiven in the court of his conscience, yet he *knows the terrors of the Lord*: he hastens to meet the awful day of God: he waits for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the character of ■ righteous Judge: he keeps an eye to the awful tribunal, before which he must soon *be justified or condemned by his words*: he is conscious that his final justification is not yet come; and therefore he would think himself a monster of stupidity and pride, if, with an eye to his absolution in the great day, he scrupled saying to the end of his life, *Forgive us our trespasses.*—3. He is surrounded with sinners, who daily *trespass against him*, and whom he is daily bound to *forgive*; and his praying that he may be forgiven now, and in the great day, *as he forgives others*, reminds him that he may forfeit his pardon, and binds him more and more to the performance of the important duty of forgiving his enemies.—And 4. His charity is so ardent that it melts him, as it were, into the common mass of mankind. Bowing himself, therefore, under the enormous load of all the wilful trespasses which his fellow-mortals, and particularly his relatives and his brethren, daily commit against God, he says with a fervour that imperfect Christians seldom feel, *Forgive us our trespasses, &c.—We are heartily sorry for our misdoings (my own, and those of my fellow-sinners:) the remembrance of them is grievous unto us: the burthen of them is intolerable.* Nor do we doubt, but, when the spirit of mourning leads a numerous assembly of supplicants into the vale of humiliation, the person who puts the shoulder of faith most readily to the common burden of sin, and heaves the most powerfully in order to roll the enormous load into the Redeemer's grave, is the most perfect penitent—the most exact observer of the apostolic precept, *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*; and, of consequence, we do not scruple to say, that such a person is the most perfect Christian in the whole assembly.

If Mr. Hill consider these answers, we doubt not but he will confess that his opposition to *Christian perfection* chiefly springs from his

inattention to our definition of it, which I once more sum up in these comprehensive lines of Mr. Wesley :

O let me gain Perfection's height!

O let me into nothing fall!

(As less than nothing in thy sight)

And feel that Christ is all in all!

VIII. Our opponents produce another plausible objection, which runs thus :—" It is plain from your account of Christian perfection, that adult believers are *free from sin* : their hearts being purified by perfect faith, and filled with perfect love. Now sin is that which humbles *us*, and drives *us* to Christ, and therefore, if we were free from indwelling sin, we should lose ■ most powerful incentive to *humility*, which is the greatest ornament of a true Christian."

We answer : Sin never humbled any soul. Who has more sin than *Satan* ? And who is prouder ?—Did sin make our first parents humble ? If it did not, how do our brethren suppose that its nature is altered for the better ?—who was humbler than Christ ? but was he indebted to *sin* for his *humility* ?—Do we not see daily, that the more sinful men are, the prouder they are also ?—Did Mr. *Hill* never observe, that the *holier* a believer is, the *humbler* he shows himself ?—And what is *holiness*, but the *reverse of sin* ?—If sin be necessary to make us *humble*, and to keep us near Christ ; does it not follow that glorified saints, whom all acknowledge to be sinless, are all proud despisers of Christ ?—If *humility* is *obedience*, and if *sin* is *disobedience*, is it not as absurd to say that *sin* will make *us humble*, i. e. *obedient* ; as it is to affirm that *rebellion* will make *us loyal*, and *adultery chaste* ?—See we not sin enough, when we look ten or twenty years back, to humble us to the dust for ever, if sin can do it ?—Need we plead for any more of it in our hearts and lives ?—If the sins of our youth do not humble us, are the sins of our old age likely to do it ?—If we contend for the life of the man of sin, that he may subdue our pride ; do we not take a large stride after those who say, "*Let us sin that grace may abound*. Let us continue full of indwelling sin, that *humility* may increase ?"—What is, after all, the evangelical method of getting *humility* ? Is it not to look at Christ in the manger, in Gethsemane, or on the cross ; to consider him when he washes his disciples' feet ; and obediently listen to him when he says, *Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart* ?—Where does the Gospel plead the cause of the *Barabbas*, and the thieves within ? Where does it say, that they may indeed be nailed to the cross, and have *their legs broken* ; but that their life must be left whole within them, lest we

should be proud of their death?—Lastly, what is indwelling sin but indwelling pride? At least is not indwelling pride one of the chief ingredients of indwelling sin? And how can pride be productive of humility? Can a serpent beget a dove? And will not men gather grapes from thorns, sooner than humility of heart from haughtiness of spirit?

IX. The strange mistake which I detect would not be so prevalent among our prejudiced brethren, if they were not deceived by the plausibility of the following argument. “When believers are humbled *for* ■ thing, they are humbled *by* it: but believers are humbled *for* sin; and therefore they are humbled *by* sin.”

The flaw of this argument is in the first proposition. We readily grant that penitents are *humbled for* sin; or in other terms, that they humbly repent of sin: but we deny that they are *humbled by* sin. To show the absurdity of the whole argument, I need only produce a sophism exactly parallel. “When people are blooded *for* a thing, they are blooded *by* it: but people are sometimes blooded *for* a cold: and therefore people are sometimes blooded *by* ■ cold.”

X. “We do not assert that all perfection is imaginary. Our meaning is, that all Christian perfection is *in Christ*; and that we are perfect in his person, and not in our own.”

Answer. If you mean by our being *perfect only in Christ*, that we can attain to Christian perfection no other way than by being perfectly grafted *in him, the true Vine*; and by deriving, like vigorous branches, the *perfect sap* of his *perfect righteousness* to enable us to bring forth fruit unto *perfection*; we are entirely agreed: for we perpetually assert, that nothing but *Christ in us the hope of glory*, nothing but *Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith*, or which is all one, nothing but *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, can make us *free from the law of sin*, and *perfect us in love*.

But, as we never advanced that *Christian perfection* is attainable any other way, than by a faith that *roots and grounds us in Christ*; we doubt some mystery of iniquity lies hid under the equivocal phrases, “All our perfection is in Christ’s person:—We are perfect in him, and not in ourselves.”

Should those who use them insinuate by such language, that we need not, cannot be perfect, by an inherent personal conformity to God’s holiness, because *Christ is thus perfect for us*: or should they mean, that we are *perfect in him*, just as country freeholders, entirely strangers to state affairs, are *perfect politicians* in the knights of the shire who represent them in parliament;—as the sick in a hospital, are *perfectly healthy* in the physician that gives them his attendance: as the blind man enjoyed *perfect sight* in Christ when he saw walking

men like moving *trees*:—as the filthy leper was *perfectly* clean in our Lord, before he had felt the power of Christ's gracious words, *I will, be thou clean*:—or as hungry *Lazarus* was *perfectly* fed in the person of the rich man, at whose gate he lay starving—should this, I say, be their meaning, we are in conscience bound to oppose it, for the reasons contained in the following queries.

1. If believers are perfect, because Christ is perfect for them, why does the apostle exhort them to *go on to perfection*?

2. If all our perfection be inherent in Christ, is it not strange, that St. Paul should exhort us to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, by *cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*? Did not Christ perfect *his own* holiness? And will his personal sanctity be imperfect till we have cleansed *ourselves* from all defilement?

3. If Christ be perfect for us, why does St. James say, *Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect*? Is Christ's perfection suspended upon the *perfect work* of our patience?

4. Upon the scheme which I oppose, what does St. Peter mean, when he says, *After ye have suffered awhile, the Lord make you perfect*? What has our *suffering awhile* to do with Christ's perfection? Was not Christ *made perfect* through his own sufferings?

5. If believers were perfect in Christ's person, they would all be *equally* perfect. But is this the case? Does not St. John talk of some who are *perfected*, and of others who are *not yet made perfect in love*? Besides, the apostle exhorts us to be *perfect*, not in Antinomian notions, but *in all the will of God, and in every good work*; and common sense dictates, that there is some difference between our *good works* and the *person of Christ*.

6. Does not our Lord himself show, that his personal righteousness will by no means be accepted instead of our personal perfection, where he says, "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit* (or whose fruit never grows to any perfection. See Luke viii. 14.) *My Father taketh it away*," far from imputing it to his perfect fruitfulness?

7. In the nature of things, can Christ's perfection supply the want of that perfection which he calls us to? Is there not a more essential difference between Christ's perfection and that of a believer, than there is between the perfection of a rose and that of the grass of the field?—between the perfection of a soaring eagle and that of a creeping insect?—If our Lord is the head of the church, and we the members, is it not absurd to suppose that his perfection becomes us in every respect? Were I allowed to carry on a scriptural metaphor, I would ask: Is not the perfection of the *head* very different from that of the *hand*? And do we not take advantage of the credulity of the

simple, when we make them believe that an impenitent adulterer and murderer is perfect in Christ ; or if you please, that a crooked leg and cloven foot are *perfectly* handsome, if they do but some how belong to a beautiful face ?

8. Let us illustrate this a little more. Does not the Redeemer's *personal* perfection consist in his being *God and man* in one person ; —in his being *eternally begotten* by the Father as the *Son of God* : and *unbegotten* in time by a father, as the *son of man* ; —in his having *given his life a ransom for all* : —in his having *taken it up again* ; and his *standing in the midst of the throne*, able to *save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him* ? Consider this, candid believer, and say if any man or angel can decently hope that such an incommunicable perfection can ever fall to his share.

9. As the Redeemer's personal perfection cannot suit the *redeemed*, no more can the personal perfection of the *redeemed* be found in the Redeemer. A believer's perfection consists in such a degree of *faith as works by perfect love*. And does not this high degree of faith chiefly imply, Uninterrupted self-diffidence, self-denial, self-despair ? A heartfelt, ceaseless recourse to the blood, merits, and righteousness of Christ ? —And a grateful love to him, *because he first loved us*, and fervent charity towards all mankind *for his sake* ? Three things these, which in the very nature of things, either cannot be in the Saviour at all ; or cannot possibly be in him in the same manner in which they must be in believers.

10. Is not the doctrine of our being perfect in Christ's person big with mischief ? Does it not open a *refuge of lies* to the loosest Ranters in the land ? Are there none who say, we are perfect in Christ's person ? In him we have perfect chastity and honesty, perfect temperance and meekness ; and we should be guilty of Pharisaic insolence if we patched his perfection with the filthy rags of our personal holiness ? And has not this doctrine a direct tendency to set godliness aside, and to countenance gross Antinomianism ?

Lastly. When our Lord preached the doctrine of perfection, did he not do it in such a manner as to demonstrate that our perfection must be *personal*. Did he ever say, *If thou wilt be perfect*, only believe that I am perfect for thee ? On the contrary, did he not declare, *If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast* ; [part with all that stands in thy way ;] *and follow me in the way of perfection* ? —And again : *Do good to them that hate you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven ; for he sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust, &c.* Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect ? Who can read these words, and not see that the perfection

which Christ preached, is a perfection of holy dispositions, productive of holy actions in all his followers? And that of consequence, it is a personal perfection, as much *inherent* in us, and yet as much *derived* from him, and *dependent* upon him, as the perfection of our bodily health? The chief difference consisting in this, that the perfection of our health comes to us from God in Christ, as the God of *nature*; whereas our Christian perfection comes to us from God in Christ, as the God of *grace*.

SECTION IV.

Mr. Hill's first Argument against Christian Perfection is taken from the IXth and XVth Articles of the Church of England. These Articles, properly understood, are not contrary to that Doctrine. That our Church holds it, is proved by thirteen Arguments. She opposes Pharisaic but not Christian Perfection. Eight Reasons are produced to show, that it is absurd to embrace the Doctrine of a Death Purgatory, because our Reformers and Martyrs, in following after the Perfection of humility, have used some unguarded Expressions, which seem to bear hard upon the Doctrine of Christian Perfection.

IN the preceding sections I have laid the axe at the root of some prejudices, and cut up a variety of objections. The controversial field is cleared. The engagement may begin: nay, it is already begun: for Mr. Hill, in his *Creed for Perfectionists*, and Mr. Toplady, in his *Caveat against Unsound Doctrines*, have brought up, and fired at our doctrine two pieces of ecclesiastical artillery;—the IXth and XVth Articles of our Church: and they conclude that the contents of these doctrinal cannons absolutely demolish the perfection we contend for. The report of their wrong-pointed ordnance, and the noise they make about our subscriptions, are loud; but that we need not be afraid of the shot, will, I hope, appear from the following observations.

The design of the XVth Article of our Church, is pointed out by the title, "*Of Christ alone without sin.*" From this title we conclude, that the scope and design of the Article is not to secure to Christ the honour of being *alone cleansed from sin*; because such an honour would be a reproach to his *original and uninterrupted purity*, which placed him far above the need of *cleansing*. Nor does the Article drop the least hint about the impossibility of our being *cleansed from sin* before we go into the purgatory of the Calvinists; I mean, the chambers of

death. What our church intends, is to distinguish *Christ* from all mankind, and especially from the *Virgin Mary*, whom the Papists assert to have been always totally free from original and actual sin. Our church does this by maintaining; 1. That *Christ* was born without the least taint of original sin, and never committed any actual transgression:—2. That all other men, the *Virgin Mary* and the most holy believers not excepted, are the very reverse of *Christ* in both these respects; all being conceived in original sin, and offending in many things, even after baptism,* and with all the helps which we have under the Christian dispensation to keep us *without sin* from day to day.—And therefore, 3. That *if we say we have no sin*—if we pretend, like some Pelagians, that we have no *original sin*; or if we intimate, like some Pharisees, that “we never did any harm in all our lives,” i. e. that we have no *actual sin*, *we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*; there being absolutely no adult person without sin in those respects, except our Lord Jesus Christ.

That this is the genuine sense of the Article appears, 1. By the absurdity which follows from the contrary sentiment. For if these words, “*Christ alone without sin*,” are to be taken in an absolute and unlimited sense: if the word *alone* entirely excludes all mankind, *at all times*; if it is levelled at our *being cleansed* from sin, as well as at our *having been always free* from original and actual pollution;—if this is the case, I say, it is evident, that not only fathers in Christ, but also *Enoch* and *Elijah*, *St. John* and *St. Paul*, are to this day tainted with sin, and must to all eternity continue so, lest *Mr. Hill’s* opinion of *Christ alone without sin* should not be true.

2. Our sentiment is confirmed by the Article itself, part of which runs thus; “*Christ, in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and in his spirit. He came to be a lamb without spot:—and sin, as St. John says, was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ,*” i. e. *although we have from our infancy all the helps that the Christian dispensation affords men to keep them without sin, “yet we offend in many things,” after our baptism “and if we say,” as the above-mentioned Pelagians and Pharisees, “that we have no” [original or actual] “sin,” i. e. that we are*

* The Rev. Mr. *Toplady*, in his *Historic Proof*, page 235, informs us, that a Popish Archbishop of St. Andrews condemned Patrick Hamilton to death, for holding among other doctrines, “*That children incontinent after baptism are sinners;*” or which is all one, that baptism does not absolutely take away original sin. This anecdote is important, and shows that our Church levels at a Popish error the words of her Articles, which *Mr. Hill* and *Mr. Toplady* suppose to be levelled at Christian Perfection.

like Christ in either of these respects ; our conception, infancy, childhood, youth, and age being all taken into the account, “ we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

Having thus opened the plain, rational, and scriptural sense in which we subscribe to our XVth Article, it remains to make a remark upon the *Ninth*.

Some bigoted Pelagians deny original sin, or the Adamic infection of our nature ; and some bigoted Papists suppose that this infection is entirely done away in baptism : in opposition to both these, our Church prudently requires our subscription to her IXth Article, which asserts : 1. That *the fault and corruption of our nature is a melancholy reality* ; and 2. That *this fault, corruption, or infection, doth remain in them who are regenerated* ; that is, in them who are baptized, or made children of God according to the Christian dispensation. For every person who has attentively read our Liturgy, knows that these expressions, *baptized, regenerated, and made a member of Christ, and a child of God*, are synonymous in the language of our church. Now, because we have acknowledged by our subscription to our ninth Article, that *the infection of our nature is not done away in baptism, but does remain in them which are regenerate, or baptized*, Mr. Hill thinks himself authorized to impose upon us the yoke of indwelling sin for life ; supposing that we cannot be fair subscribers to that Article, unless we renounce the glorious liberty of God’s children, and embrace the Antinomian Gospel, which is summed up in these unguarded words of Luther, quoted by Bogatzky in his *Golden Treasury*.* “ *The sins of a Christian are for his good, and if he had no sin, he would not be so well off ;—neither would prayer flow so well.*” Can any thing be either more unscriptural or absurd ? What unprejudiced person does not see, we may, with the greatest consistency, maintain that baptism does not remove the Adamic infection of sin, and that nevertheless this infection may be removed before death ?

Nevertheless we are willing to make Mr. Hill all the concessions we can, consistently with a good conscience. If, by “ *the infection of nature*,” he understand the natural ignorance which has infected our understanding ; the natural forgetfulness which has affected our memory ; the inbred debility of all our mental powers, and the poisonous seeds of mortality, which infect all men from head to foot, and hinder the strongest believers from serving God with all the fervour they would be capable of, were they not fallen from paradi-

* See the edition printed in London in 1773, p. 328.

siacal perfection, under the curse of a body sentenced to die, and dead because of sin:—If Mr. Hill, I say, understand this by “*the infection of nature*,” we believe that such an infection, with all the natural, innocent appetites of the flesh, remains not only in those whom the Scriptures call *babes in Christ*, but also in *fathers*; there being no adult believer that may not say, as well as *Christ, Adam, or St. Paul, I thirst.—I am hungry.—I want a help meet for me.—I know but in part.—I see darkly through a glass.—I groan, being burdened.—He that marrieth sinneth not.—It is better to marry than to burn, &c.*

But, if Mr. Hill, by “*the infection of nature*,” mean the *sinful lusts* of the flesh, such as mental drunkenness, gluttony, whoredom, &c.—or, if he understand unloving, diabolical tempers, such as envy, pride, stubbornness, malice, sinful anger, ungodly jealousy, unbelief, fretfulness, impatience, hypocrisy, revenge, or any moral opposition to the will of God; if Mr. Hill, I say, understand this by “*the infection of nature*,” and if he suppose that these evils must *radically and necessarily* remain in the hearts of all believers [*fathers in Christ* not excepted] till death comes to *cleanse the thoughts* of their hearts by the inspiration of his ill-smelling breath; we must take the liberty of dissenting from him; and we produce the following arguments to prove, that whatever Mr. Hill may insinuate to the contrary, the Church of England is not against the doctrine of evangelical perfection, which we vindicate.

I. Our Church can never be so inconsistent as to level her Articles against what she ardently prays for in her Liturgy: but she ardently prays for Christian perfection, or for perfect love in this life: therefore she is not against Christian perfection. The second proposition of this argument can alone be disputed, and I support it by the well-known Collect in the communion service, “*Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” Here we see, 1. The nature of Christian Perfection, it is *perfect love*: 2. The seat of this perfect love; *a heart cleansed from its own thoughts*: 3. The blessed effect of it, *a worthy magnifying of God’s holy name*: 4. Its author, *God*, of whom the blessing is asked. 5. The immediate mean of it, *the inspiration of his Holy Spirit*: and lastly, the gracious procurer of it, *our Lord Jesus Christ*.

II. This vein of godly desire after Christian perfection runs through her daily service. In her Confession she prays, “*Restore thou them that are penitent, according to thy promises, &c. that hereafter we may live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name.*”—Now, *godliness, righteousness, and sobriety* being the sum of

our duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves, are also the sum of Christian perfection. Nor does our church absolve any, but such as desire *that the rest of their life may be pure and holy, so that at the last they may come to God's eternal joy*; plainly intimating that we may get a *pure heart*, and lead *a pure and holy life*, without going into a death purgatory: and those who do not attain to purity of heart and life, that is, to perfection, are in danger of missing *God's eternal joy*.

III. Hence it is, that she is not ashamed to pray daily for *sinless purity*, in the *Te Deum*: “Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us *this day without sin*,” that is, *sinless*; for I suppose, that the title of our XVth Article, “*Of Christ alone without sin*,” means *Of Christ alone sinless* from his conception to his last gasp. This deep petition is perfectly agreeable to the Collects for the ix. xvii. xviii. and xixth Sundays after Trinity. “Grant to us the spirit to *think*, and *do always* such things as be rightfuf,—that we may be enabled to *live according to thy will*,”—i. e. to *live without sin*.—“We pray thee, that thy grace may *always* prevent and follow us, and make us to be *continually* given to *all good works*,” &c.—“Grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with *pure hearts and minds* to follow thee.”—“Mercifully grant that thy holy Spirit may *in all things* direct and rule our hearts.”—Again: “May it please thee, that by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him [Luke, the evangelist and physician of the soul,] *all the diseases of our souls* may be healed,” &c. *St. Luke's day*. “*Mortify and kill in us all vices*” [and among them envy, selfishness, and pride;] and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the *innocency* of our lives, and *constancy* of our faith unto death, we may glorify thy holy name,” &c. *The Innocents day*.—“Grant us the help of thy grace, that *in keeping thy commandments*, we may please thee both in *will and deed*.” *First Sunday after Trinity*.—“Direct, sanctify, and govern both our *hearts and bodies*, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy *commandments*, that we may be preserved” [*in these ways and works*] “*in body and soul*.”—“Prevent us in all our doings, &c. and further us with thy *continual* help; that in all our works, *begun, continued, and ended* in thee, we may glorify thy holy name.” *Communion Service*.—Once more: “Grant that in *all* our sufferings here on earth, &c. we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being *filled with the Holy Ghost*, may learn to bless our persecutors by the example of thy first martyr,” &c. *St. Stephen's day*. It is worth our notice, that *blessing our persecutors and murderers*, is the last beatitude, the

highest instance of Christian perfection, and the most difficult of all the duties, which, if we may believe our Lord, constitute us *perfect*, in our sphere, as our heavenly Father is perfect. See Matt. v. 11. 44, 45, 48.

IV. *Perfect love*, i. e. Christian perfection instantaneously springs from *perfect faith*: and as our Church would have all her members perfect in love, she requires them to pray thus for perfect faith, which must be obtained in this life or never. "Grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reprov'd." *St. Thomas's day.*

V. Our Lord teaches us to ask for the highest degree of Christian perfection, where he commands us, *When we pray, to say, &c. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* And our Church, by introducing this deep prayer in all her services; shows how greatly Mr. Hill is mistaken when he supposes that she looks upon our doctrine of Christian perfection as "*shocking.*"

Should this gentleman object that, although our Church bids us pray for Christian perfection in the above-cited Collects, and in our Lord's prayer, yet she does not intimate that these deep prayers may be answered in this life: I oppose to that argument not only the word *on earth*, which she so frequently mentions in the Lord's prayer, but also her own words: "Everlasting God, who art *more* ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than we desire, &c. pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy," &c. *Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.* Mr. Hill must therefore excuse us, if we side with our praying church, and are not ashamed to say with St. Paul, *Glory be to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* Eph. iii. 20.

VI. That our Church cannot reasonably be against *Christian perfection*, I farther prove thus: What the Church of England recommends as the end of baptism, can never be contrary to her doctrine. But she recommends a *death unto sin*, or *Christian perfection*, as the end of baptism: therefore she cannot be against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition, which alone is disputable, I prove by these words of her Catechism: "What is the inward or spiritual grace in baptism? A *death unto sin*, and a new birth unto righteousness."—Hence she prays at the grave, "We beseech thee to raise us from the *death of sin* to the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him." [*Christ.*] Now, that a *death to sin* is the end of baptism, and that this end is never *fully* answered till this death has *fully* taken place, is evident by the following extract from our baptismal office: "Grant that the old Adam in this person may

be so *buried*, that the new may be raised up in him. Grant that *all carnal affections* [and consequently *all the carnal mind*, and *all inbred sin*] may die in him, and that *all things* belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him."—"Grant that the person now to be baptized may receive the *fulness of thy grace*.—Grant, that he being dead to sin, and living to righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may *crucify* the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin." How can we maintain with our Church, that we are to *crucify*, *mortify*, [i. e. kill] and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; so as to be dead to sin, and to have the old Adam buried in this life: and yet hold with Mr. Hill, that this whole body of sin, which we are utterly to abolish, is to remain wholly and utterly unabolished till death come to abolish it?

VII. Our Church is not against that end of the Lord's supper, which she constantly inculcates: but that end of the Lord's supper, which she constantly inculcates, is *Christian perfection*: therefore our church is not against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition, which alone needs proof, is founded upon these deep words of our communion service. "Grant us so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us." These words express the height of Christian perfection, nor has the Lord's supper had its full end upon us, till that prayer is answered.

VIII. Our Church is not against what she considers as the end of Christ's nativity, and of his being presented in the temple: but what she considers as that end is *Christian perfection*: therefore she is not against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition of this argument is founded, 1. Upon the proper preface to Christmas-day in the communion service. "Christ, &c. was made very man, &c. without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin:"—And 2. Upon these words of the Collect for the presentation of Christ in the temple: "We humbly beseech thee, that as thy only begotten Son was presented in the temple in substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto thee with pure and clean hearts."

IX. The same argument holds good with respect to our Lord's circumcision, his keeping of the passover with unleavened bread, his ascending into heaven,—and his sending the Comforter from thence. That, according to our Church, the end of these events is our *Christian perfection*, appears by the following extracts from her Collects. "Grant us the true circumcision of the spirit, that our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, we

may in all things obey," &c. *The circumcision of Christ.*—"Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth." *First Sunday after Easter.* "Grant, &c. that we may also in heart and mind thither [to heaven] ascend, and with him [Christ] continually dwell," &c. *Ascension day.*—"Grant us, by the same spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort." *Whitsuntide.*

X. Our Church cannot reasonably oppose what she ardently wishes to all her communicants, and what she earnestly asks for and strongly recommends to all her members: but she thus wishes, asks, and recommends *deliverance from all sin, and perfect charity*, that is, *Christian perfection*; and therefore she cannot be against *Christian perfection*. The second proposition is founded, 1. Upon these words of the absolution, which she gives to all communicants. "Almighty God, &c. pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness."—2. Upon her Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday: "Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues:" (St. Paul calls it the *bond of perfection*.)—And 3. Upon the definition which she gives us of *charity* in her homilies. "Charity [says she] is to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our power and strength.—With all our heart: that is to say, that our heart, mind, and study be set to believe his word, and to love him above all things that we love best in heaven or in earth. With all our soul: that is to say, that our chief joy and delight be set upon him, and our whole life given to his service.—With all our power: that is to say, that, with our hands and feet, with our eyes and ears, our mouths and tongues, and with all our parts and powers, both of body and soul, we should be given to the keeping of his commandments. This is the principal part of *charity* but it is not the whole; for *charity* is also to love every man. good and evil, friend and foe, whatsoever cause be given to the contrary." *Hom. on Charity.*—"Of charity [St. John] says, He that doth keep God's word and commandment, in him is truly the perfect love of God, &c. And St. John wrote not this as a subtle saying, &c. but as a most certain and necessary truth" *Homily of Faith, Part. II.*—"Thus it is declared unto you, what true charity or *Christian love* is, &c. which love, whosoever keepeth, not only towards God, whom he is bound to love above all things. but also towards his neighbour, as well friend as foe, it shall surely keep him from all offence of God, and just offence of man." *Homily on Charity, Part II.*—Again: "Every man persuadeth him-

self to be in *charity*, but let him examine his own heart, his life and conversation, and he shall truly discern whether he be in perfect *charity* or not. For he that followeth not his own will, but giveth himself earnestly to God, to do all his will and commandments, he may be sure that he loveth God above all things, or else surely he loveth him not, whatsoever he pretend." *Homily on Charity*.—Once more : " Perfect *patience* careth not what, nor how much it suffereth, nor of whom it suffereth, whether of friend or foe, but studieth to suffer innocently. Yea, he in whom perfect *charity* is, careth so little to revenge, that he rather studieth to do good for evil, according to the most perfect example of Christ upon the cross.—Such *charity* and love as Christ showed in his passion, should we bear one to another, if we will be his true servants. If we love but them that love us, what great thing do we do? We must be perfect in our *charity*, even as our Father in heaven is perfect." *Homily for Good Friday*.

XI. That state which our Church wants all her priests to bring their flocks to, is not a "shocking" or chimerical state ; but she wants all her priests to bring all their flocks to "*perfectness in Christ*," that is, to *Christian perfection* : and therefore the state of *Christian perfection* is neither shocking nor chimerical. The minor, which alone is contestable, rests upon this awful part of the charge, which all her bishops give to her Priests ; " See that you never cease your labour, care, and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you to bring all such as shall be committed to your charge unto that agreement of faith, and that *ripeness* and *perfectness of age in Christ*, that there be no place left among you for *error* in religion, or *viciousness* in life." *Ordin. Office*.

Nor is our Church less strict with the laity than with the clergy ; for she receives none into her congregation, but such as profess a determination of coming up to *Christian Perfection*. Accordingly all her members have solemnly *promised and vowed* by their sponsors at their baptism, and in their own persons when they were confirmed by the bishop ; 1. *To renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, without reserve, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh* ; 2. *To believe all the Articles of the Christian faith* ; and 3. *To keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life*. And is not this vowing to *perfect holiness in the fear of God* ? Does the first part of this sacred engagement, leave any room for a moment's agreement with the devil, the world, or the flesh ? Does the second make the least allowance for one doubt with respect to any one Article of the Christian faith ? or the third,

for one wilful breach of *God's commandments*? Again, are not these commandments thus summed up in our Church catechism: *I learn in them my duty towards God, which is to love him with all my heart,—and my duty towards my neighbour, which is to love him as myself*? Is not this perfect love, or Christian perfection? And have we not vowed to walk in the same all the days of our life? As many churchmen therefore as make conscience of keeping their baptismal vow, must not only go on, but attain unto perfection; and if there have been no perfect Christians in our Church, all her members have died in the actual breach of the awful promise which they made in their baptism: a supposition too shocking either to make or allow.

If you ask, Where are those perfect churchmen, or Christians? I answer: that if the perfect love that keeps the commandments is not attainable, our baptismal vow is absurd and detestable; for it is both irrational and very wicked to vow things absolutely impossible. But this is not all; upon that supposition the Bible, which makes such frequent mention of the perfect, and of perfection, is no better than a Popish legend; for that book ought to rank among religious romances, which recommends imaginary things as if they were indubitable realities. So sure then as the Bible is true, there are or may be perfect Christians; but

Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi.

“While we honour dead saints, we call those who are alive enthusiasts, hypocrites, or heretics:” It is not proper therefore to expose them to the darts of envy and malice. And suppose living witnesses of perfect love were produced, what would be the consequence? Their testimony would be excepted against by those who disbelieve the doctrine of Christian perfection, just as the testimony of the believers who enjoy the sense of their justification, is rejected by those who do not believe that a clear experience of the peace and pardoning love of God is attainable in this life. If the original, direct perfection of *Christ* himself was horribly blackened by his bigoted opposers, how could the derived, reflected perfection of his members escape the same treatment from men, whose hearts are tintured with a degree of the same bigotry?

Add to this, that in order to harden unbelievers, the accuser of the brethren perpetually obtrudes upon the church, not only false witnesses of pardoning grace, but also vain pretenders to perfect love: for he knows, that by putting off as many counterfeits as he possibly can, he will give the enemies of the truth room to say, that there is

in the church no gold purified seven times,—no coin truly stamped with the King's image, *perfect love*; and bearing the royal inscription, *Holiness unto the Lord.*”*

Therefore, instead of saying, that this or the other eminent believer has attained Christian perfection, we rest the cause upon the experience of St. John, and of those with whom that apostle could say :—*There is no occasion of stumbling in him that loveth.—Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because [with respect to holiness] as he is [in his human nature] so are we in this world—pure, undefiled, and filled with perfect love ; with this difference nevertheless, that he is in the kingdom of glory, and we in the kingdom of grace ; he has a glorified, and we a corruptible body : he has the original perfection of a tree, and we the derived perfection of branches growing upon it. Or, to use another comparison, He shines with the communicative perfection of a pure, bright, unextinguishable fire ; and we with a borrowed, and yet inherent perfection of a coal entirely lighted. The burning mineral was black, cold, and filthy, before it was impregnated with the perfection of the fire ; it continues bright, hot, and pure, only so long as it remains in the fire that kindled it ; for if it fall from it by any accident, the shining perfection which it had acquired gradually vanishes, and it becomes a filthy cinder, the black emblem of an apostate. So true is that saying of our Lord, Without me, or rather separate from me, ye can do nothing : ye can neither get nor keep light or heat, knowledge or love. But when we live not, and Christ liveth in us : when our life is hid with Christ in God, when we dwell in God, and God dwells in us ; then it is that our love is made perfect, and that, loving one another even as Christ hath loved us, as he is loving, so are we in this world.* 1 John iv. 17.

Such was the avowed experience of fathers in Christ in the apostolic times, and such it undoubtedly is also in our days. Nor can I persuade myself that our Church trifles with her children when she describes the perfect Christian thus in her homily for Good Friday.

* Among the professors, who have lately set up as witnesses of *perfect love*, I am not a little surprised to find Mr. Hill himself. This gentleman, who has treated Mr. Wesley with such severity for standing up in defence of perfect love, or Christian Perfection, most solemnly ranks himself among the *perfect lovers* of their neighbours, yea, of their adversaries ! Hear him make his astonishing profession before the world, at the end of his pamphlet called *The Admonisher admonished*.—“I most solemnly declare,” says he, “that I am in perfect charity with Dr. Adams as well as with you, Sir, my unknown antagonist.” I never yet heard a Perfectionist make so solemn and so public a profession of *perfect love*.

“He in whom perfect charity is, careth so little to revenge, that he rather studieth to do good for evil, according to the most perfect example of Christ upon the cross.”

XIII. If Mr. Hill reply, that our Church speaks there of a mere nonentity : and that we can never have a grain of perfect charity in this life, because the old leaven of *indwelling sin* will always corrupt the sweetness of our tempers before God ; I answer his objection by producing my last proof, that our Church holds the very doctrine for which we are called *perfectionists*. Hear her pressing perfect love and purity upon all her communicants : “*Have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ, &c. and be in perfect charity with all men.*” *Com. Office.*—And 2. Upon all her feeble children. *Though your power be weak, [says she to them,] yet Christ is risen again to strengthen you in your battle : His holy Spirit shall help your infirmities. In trust of his mercy take you in hand to purge this leaven of sin, that corrupteth and soureth the sweetness of our life before God ; that ye may be as new and fresh dough, void of all sour leaven of wickedness ; so shall ye show yourselves to be sweet bread to God, that he may have his delight in you.* Hom. on the Resur.

All the preceding arguments support our sense of the IXth and XVth articles ; and if Mr. Hill urge, that our Church contradicts herself, and sometimes pleads for Christian imperfection and a death purgatory ; we reply, that, supposing the charge were well grounded, yet we ought rather to follow her, when she soberly follows Scripture, than when she hastily follows inconsistent *Augustine*. But we would rather hope, that when she speaks of human depravity in a manner which seems to bear hard upon the preceding quotations, it is either when she speaks of human depravity *in general*, or when she inculcates the perfection of humility, or when she opposes the feigned perfection of those whom she ironically calls “*proud, just, perfect, and holy Pharisees.*” Hom. on the Misery of Man. From these and the like words, therefore, we have as much reason to conclude, that she renounces true, Christian holiness, as to infer, that she decries true, Christian perfection. Besides the delusion of those Pharisees, who have missed a perfection of *evangelical righteousness and humility*, and have attained a perfection of *self-righteousness and pride*, is so horrible, and so diametrically opposite to the spirit of Christianity, that our Reformers deserve to be excused, if they have sometimes opposed that error in an unguarded manner ; especially as they have so clearly and so frequently asserted the glorious liberty of God’s children.

I shall close this vindication of the Church of England with some remarks upon her "Martyrs," whom Mr. Hill produces also in his creed, to keep the doctrine of *Christian imperfection* in countenance.

1. If any of our Martyrs, speaking of his converted, renewed, and sanctified state, said, "I am *all sin*," or words to that purpose, he spoke the words of unguarded humility, rather than the words of evangelical soberness; for a man may have grace and zeal enough to burn for *one* truth, without having time and prudence enough, properly to investigate and state *every* truth.

2. In our state of weakness, the very *perfection of humility* may betray an *injudicious* martyr into the use of expressions which seem to clash with the glorious liberty of God's children; just as an excessive love for our friends may betray us into an *injudicious* and teasing officiousness.

3. When a martyr considers himself in his fallen state in Adam, or in his *former* state of disobedience, he may say, "*I am all sin*," in the very same sense in which St. Paul said, *I am the chief of sinners*. But allow him time to explain himself, and he will soon give you to understand that he *rejoices in the testimony of a good conscience, purged from dead works to serve the living God*; and that far from harbouring any sin in himself, he is determined to *strive against sin* in others; *resisting unto blood*. And is not such a disposition as this one of the highest steps in the ladder of *Christian perfection*?

4. Hence it appears that the unguarded expressions of our martyrs were levelled at *Pharisaic pride*, or at *absolute perfection*, and not at *Christian perfection*. Like some pious Calvinists in our days, they embraced Christian perfection in *deed*, whilst, through misapprehension, they disclaimed it in *word*. And therefore their speeches against the glorious liberty of God's children, show only, that Christian perfection is a perfection of *humility and love*, and not a perfection of *wisdom and knowledge*.

5. If it can be proved that any of those, who rank among our martyrs, died full of *indwelling sin*, I will not scruple to say that he died a *bigot*, and not a *martyr*; for, to die full of *indwelling sin* is to die full of secret obstinacy and uncharitableness, and St. Paul declares, that were an apostle himself to *give his body to be burned* in such a disposition, *it would profit him nothing*.

6. As many brave Englishmen have laid down their lives in the field of battle, to defend their country against the French, without being properly acquainted with the liberties and boundaries of the

British empire ; so many Protestants have laid down their lives in *Smithfield*, to defend their religion against the Papists, without being acquainted with all the landmarks, which divide the land of spiritual *Israel* from that of the *Philistines*, and perfect Christianity from *Antinomian dotages*.

7. The Jews can produce their martyrs as well as the Protestants. The *Maccabees*, for example, died entirely satisfied with the *Mosaic* covenant, and strangers to the transcendent glory of the *Christian* dispensation. But is this a sufficient reason for preferring *Judaism* to *Christianity*?—Yes, if Mr. *Hill* be in the right, when he decries the doctrine of perfect faith and perfect love, and imposes upon us the doctrine of a death purgatory, because some good men formerly died without having clear views of the doctrine of *Christian perfection* ; though like men who eat honey in the dark, they tasted its sweetness, and delightfully experienced its power.

8. To conclude : I am persuaded, that were all our Reformers and martyrs alive, none of them would object to this argument, which sums up the doctrine of the Church of England with respect to purgatory. If death cleanseth us from indwelling sin, it is not Christ's blood applied by the Spirit through faith. But the only purgatory wherein we [Christian men] trust to be saved, is the death and blood of Christ, which if we apprehend it with a true and steadfast faith, purgeth and cleanseth us from all our sins. The blood of Christ, says St. John, hath cleansed us from all sin. *Hom. on Prayer*, Part III.—Therefore, the doctrine that death, &c. cleanseth us from all indwelling sin ; or the doctrine of a death purgatory, is as contrary to the doctrine of our Church as to that of St. John.

SECTION V.

Mr. Hill intimates that the apostles were Imperfectionists.—St. Peter and St. James, far from pleading for a death purgatory, stand up for Christian perfection.

WHEN Mr. *Hill* has so unadvisedly brought the Church of England against us, it is not surprising to see him press four apostles, "*Peter, Paul, James, and John*," into the field, to "*cut up, (as he calls it) root and branch, my favourite doctrine of perfection.*" Never were these holy men set upon a more unholy piece of work. Methinks I hear them say, Let Mr. *Hill* rank us with the *Gibeonites* : let him make us hewers of wood to the congregation for ever : but let him not set us upon cutting up root and branch the lovely and fruitful tree of

Christian perfection. Happily for that rare tree, Mr. Hill only produces the names of the apostolic woodmen, while we produce their axe, and show that they lay it at the root of *Antinomianism*;—a deadly tree this, which is to our favourite tree, what the fatal tree in paradise was to the tree of life. Mr. Hill appeals first to *Peter*; let then *Peter* first answer for himself.

1. Where does that apostle plead for Christian imperfection, and death purgatory? Is it where he says, *As HE who has called you is HOLY; so be ye HOLY in ALL manner of conversation:—Seeing you have purified your souls, &c. love one another with a PURE HEART FERVENTLY:—Christ—left us an example that ye should follow his steps: who DID NO SIN:—who bare our sins, that we, being DEAD TO SIN, should live to righteousness; forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.—The God of all grace, &c. after that ye have suffered awhile, make you PERFECT?* Had Peter been against our doctrine, is it probable that he would thus have excited believers to attain perfection; wishing it them as we wish our flocks the peace of God which passes all understanding.

If that apostle pleads not for the necessary indwelling of sin in his first epistle, doth he do it in the second? Is it where he says, that *Exceeding great and precious promises are given us, that by these we might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE, having escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust?* Is there indwelling sin in the Divine nature? And can those people whose hearts are still full of sin and indwelling corruption, be said to have escaped the pollution that is in the world through lust? Might not a man whose lungs are still full of dangerous ulcers, be said with as much propriety to have escaped the misery that is in the world through consumptions?—Is it where St. Peter describes Christian perfection, and exhorts believers to attain it, or to rise higher in it, by adding with *all diligence to faith, virtue—to virtue, knowledge—temperance—patience—godliness—brotherly kindness—and charity, the key of the arch, and the bond of perfection?*—Is it where he states the difference between fallen believers, weak believers, and perfect Christians; hinting, that the first LACK these things, i. e. Christian graces; that these things ARE in the second: and that they ABOUND in the third? Or is it where he bids us be diligent that we may be found of God in peace, WITHOUT SPOT AND BLAMELESS? For my part, I do not see here the shadow of a plea for the root of every evil in the hearts of believers till they die, any more than for the fruit of adultery, murder, and incest, in their lives till they go hence.

But what principally strikes us in Mr. Hill's appeal to St. Peter is, that although Peter was naturally led by his subject to speak of the necessary indwelling of sin in our hearts during the term of life, if that doctrine had been true; yet he does not so much as drop one hint about it. The design of his first epistle was undoubtedly to confirm believers under the fiery trials which their faith meets with. *You are kept, says he, by the power of God, through [obedient] faith unto salvation, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* What a fair opportunity had Peter to say here, without an *if need be*, "You must be in heaviness, not only through manifold temptations, but also through the remaining corruptions of your hearts: the Canaanites and wild beasts must still dwell in the land, to be goads in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, or you would grow proud and careless; your heart-leprosy must cleave to you, as Gehazi's leprosy cleaved to him. Death radically cured him, and nothing but death can radically cure you. Till then your heads must remain full of imputed righteousness, and your hearts full of indwelling sin." But happily for the honour of Christianity, this Antinomian, this impure Gospel has not the least countenance from St. Peter: and he cuts up the very roots of it where he says—*Who shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?—Commit the keeping of your souls unto God in well-doing.* [The very reverse of sinning.]—*You are his daughters, [the daughters of him to whom God said, Walk before me, and be thou perfect] so long as ye DO WELL, and are not AFRAID with any amazement, i. e. so long as your conduct and tempers become the Gospel. And every body knows, that a man's tempers are always as his heart; and that, if his heart be full of evil, his tempers cannot be full of goodness.* Rom. xv. 14.

II. If St. Peter, the first of Mr. Hill's witnesses, does not say one word to countenance Antinomianism, and to recommend Christian imperfection; let us see if St. James pleads for Baal in the hearts, any more than for Baal in the lives, of perfect believers. Turn to his epistle, O ye that thirst after holiness; to your comfort you will find, that in the first chapter he shows himself a bold asserter of Christian perfection. *Let patience, says he, have her PERFECT WORK, that ye may be PERFECT, and ENTIRE, wanting nothing.* He speaks the same language in other places. *Whoso looketh into the PERFECT LAW of liberty, and CONTINUETH THEREIN, he being a DOER OF THE WORK, shall be blessed IN HIS DEED.*—And again:—*If any man offend not in word, the same is a PERFECT MAN.* Nor is it difficult to demonstrate

from his second chapter, that established believers, or perfect Christians, keep the royal, perfect law of liberty; and that those who break it in one point are in a deplorable case.

If Mr. Wesley had written an epistle to Antinomian believers, to make them go on to Christian perfection, could he have expressed himself in a stronger manner than St. James does in the following passages? *Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned, [or damned]* James v. 9. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that judgeth his brother judgeth the law. But if thou judge the law, thou art not a DOER OF THE LAW, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy [those believers, who keep or break his royal law,]* James iv. 11, 12.—Again: *If ye FULFIL THE ROYAL LAW, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye DO WELL: but [if ye do not fulfil it,] if ye have respect to persons, ye COMMIT SIN. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend [i. e. commit sin] in one point, he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.* James ii. 8, &c.

What follows, demonstrates that fallen believers, if they do not repent and rise to the state of Christian perfection, will be condemned for one sin. St. James properly instances in the sin of uncharitableness, because it is directly contrary to our Lord's new commandment, of loving one another as he has loved us, and because charity is the fulfilling of the royal law, and the bond of perfection. Can faith save him, (the uncharitable believer) says St. James?—*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you [believers] say, Be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, [and of consequence, the fallen believer, if he has sin unrepented of] is dead.*—Such a one is of the devil, for he committeth sin, and sin is the transgression of the law of liberty, by which he shall be judged, yea, by which he shall have judgment without mercy, that has [thus] showed no mercy; whether he sinned negatively by not relieving his poor brother in deed, though he gave him good words: or whether he did it positively, by having respect to persons, or by grudging against his brother. Compare James ii. 13, &c. with 1 John iii. 4, &c. to the end of both chapters, which are two strong batteries raised on purpose to defend the doctrine of Christian perfection, and to demolish the doctrine of Christian imperfection, which is all one with Antinomianism.

Should it be objected, that, “at this rate, no Christian believer is safe, till he has obtained Christian perfection;” we reply, that all

Christian believers are safe, who either *stand in* it, or *press after* it. And if they do neither, we are ready to prove, that they rank among fallen believers, and are in as imminent danger of being *spewed out of Christ's mouth* as the *Laodiceans* were. Let Mr. Hill candidly read the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the second Epistle of St. *Peter*, and the first of St. *John*, and let him doubt of it if he can.

Should Mr. Hill object, that "St. James himself says, *In many things we offend all*; and that this one saying abundantly proves that he was a strong *imperfectionist*:" I beg leave to involve my honoured opponent in the following dilemma. Are the *offences* of which St. James speaks *involuntary*? Or are they *voluntary*? If Mr. Hill says, They are *involuntary*, I answer, Then they are not proper breaches of the *law of liberty* which St. James preaches; because that law curses us for no *involuntary* offences; and therefore, such offences, [like St. Paul's reproving of the High Priest more sharply than he would have done, had he known what high dignity his unjust judge was invested with,] such offences, I say, are not *sins* according to the royal and evangelical law of our *Melchisedec*; and therefore they do not prove that *all* believers remain full of *indwelling sin* till death.—If Mr. Hill reply, that "The *many offences* of which St. James speaks, are *voluntary* offences, and therefore real breaches of the *law of liberty*;" I answer, that this *genuine* sense of the words, taken in connexion with the context, confirms our doctrine of Christian perfection, and our opposition to Antinomianism; and I prove it thus:

The text and context runs thus: *My brethren, be not many masters*: [i. e. lord it not over one another;] *knowing that we* [who do so] *shall receive the greater condemnation* if we do not learn humility. I say, *we*, because I would not have you think that God our Judge is a respecter of persons, and will spare an apostle who breaks the law of liberty, and does not repent, any more than he would spare you. For if I represented God as a partial judge, Judas's greater condemnation would prove me mistaken. And I insist the more upon this awful doctrine, because *in many things we offend all*, especially *in word*, till we are made perfect in love, that love which is the *fulfilling of the law*, and enables us to *keep our tongue as it were with a bridle* all the day long.—If Mr. Hill ask, by what means I can show, that this is really St. James's meaning: I reply; by that plain rule of divinity and criticism, which bids us take the *beginning* of a verse *in connexion with the end*. And if we do this here, we find the doctrine of Christian perfection in this very text, thus: *We shall receive the greater damnation* if we do not repent and cease to be *many mas-*

ters : for in many things we from time to time offend all, especially by our words, till we are perfected in love. If any man offend not in word, the same is, what each of us should be, a perfect man, and able also to bridle his whole body; James iii. 1, 2.—So certain therefore, as there are men able to bridle their tongue, and their whole bodies, there are men perfect in the body—perfect before death, according to the doctrine contained in this controverted passage of St. James.

“ But St. James says also, *The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.* James iv. 5.”

I reply : 1. It is usual for modest teachers to rank themselves with the persons, of whom they say something disagreeable : and this they do to take away the harshness of their doctrine, and to make way for the severity of their charges. Thus Peter writes, *The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries* : though it is evident that Peter, a poor, industrious, godly Jew, never walked in abominable idolatries ; working the will of the Gentiles. Now the same delicacy of charity, which made St. Peter rank himself with heathens, who walked in drunkenness, whoredom, and gross idolatry, makes St. James rank himself with the carnal Christians, who are possessed by an envious spirit.

2. Nay, St. James himself, using the same figure of speech, says, *The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, &c. therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God.* But would it be reasonable to infer from these words, that his tongue was still full of deadly poison, and that he therewith continued to curse his neighbour ? Therefore all that is implied in his words about envy, is that, till we are made perfect in the charity which envieth not, and is not puffed up, the spirit that is in us lusteth to envy and pride. And that we, who have not yet attained Christian perfection, need not be always envious and proud, is evident from the very next words, *But he giveth more grace, wherefore he says, God resisteth the proud, envious man, but giveth grace to the humble ;—Resist the devil, and he will flee from you :—purify your hearts, ye double-minded : Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep : let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness* : so severe was St. James to those adulterers and adulteresses, those genteel believers, who stopped short of Christian perfection, loved the world, and envied one another ! Therefore, to press him into the service of Solifidianism, is as rash an attempt as to call his Epistle an Epistle of straw, worthy of being committed to the

flames ; and [if the preceding remarks are just] Mr. *Hill* is as much mistaken, when he appeals to St. James, as when he quotes St. Peter, in defence of Christian imperfection.

SECTION VI.

St. Paul preached Christian Perfection, and professed to have attained it.—A view of the different Sorts of Perfection which belong to the different Dispensations of Grace and Glory.—The holy Child Jesus's Imperfection in Knowledge and Suffering, and his growing in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man, were entirely consistent with his Perfection of Humble Love.

ST. PAUL'S name appears upon Mr. *Hill's* list of witnesses against Christian perfection ; but it is without the apostle's consent ; for Peter and James did not plead more strenuously for the glorious liberty of God's children than St. Paul. Nay, he professed to have attained it, and addressed Fathers in Christ as persons that were partakers of it together with himself. " We speak wisdom (says he) among them that are perfect," 1 Cor. ii. 6.—" Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," Phil. iii. 15.

Nor did Paul fancy that Christian perfection was to be confined to the apostolic order : for he wanted all believers to be like him in this respect. Hence it is, that he exhorted the Corinthians to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *to be perfect*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *to be perfectly joined together in the same mind*, 1 Cor. i. 10. and showed them the perfect, or more excellent way, 1 Cor. xiii.—He told the Ephesians, that God gave pastors for the perfecting of the saints,—till all come in the unity of the faith,—unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ;—Eph. iv. 12, 13.—He taught every man, &c. that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. i. 28.—He wanted the Colossians fully to put on charity, which is the bond of perfection,—that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, Col. iii. 14. iv. 12. He would have the man of God to be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work, 2 Tim. iii. 17.—He exhorted his converts, *whether they did eat, drink, or do any thing else, to do all to the glory of God, and in the name of the Lord Jesus ; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks* : that is, he exhorted them to walk according to the strictest rules of Christian perfection.—He blamed the Hebrews for being still

such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat; observing that strong meat, *ἔστι τελειῶν*, *belongeth to them that are perfect*, even to them who by reason of use, or experience, have their [spiritual] senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 12, &c. He begins the next chapter by exhorting them to go on to perfection; intimating that, if they do not, they may insensibly fall away, put the Son of God to open shame, and not be renewed again to repentance. And he concludes the whole epistle by a pathetic wish, that the God of peace would make them perfect in every good work to do his will. Hence it appears, that it would not be less unreasonable to set St. Paul upon crucifying Christ afresh, than to make him attack Christ's well-known doctrine, *Be ye [morally] perfect*, [according to your narrow capacity and bounded power] *even as your heavenly Father is [morally] perfect* [in his infinite nature, and boundless Godhead.] Matt. v. 48.

Mr. Hill will probably attempt to set all these Scriptures aside, by saying, that nothing can be more absurd, than to represent Paul as a perfectionist, because he says himself, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect*, Phil. iii. 12. But some remarks upon the different sorts of perfection, and upon the peculiar perfection, which the apostle said he had not yet attained, will easily solve this difficulty.

Mr. Hill is too well acquainted with divinity not to know that absolute perfection belongs to God alone, and that Christ himself, with respect to his humanity, fell and still falls short of infinite perfection, omniscience, and a wisdom admitting of no growth, are essential to absolute perfection: but the man Christ was not omniscient; for he did not know the day of judgment: nor was his wisdom infinite, for he grew in wisdom. Nay, his happiness is not yet absolute, for it daily increases as he sees his seed, and is more and more satisfied. God alone is supremely perfect: all beings are imperfect when they are compared to him: and though all his works were perfect in their places, yet, as he gave them different degrees of perfection, they which have inferior degrees of goodness may be said to be imperfect in comparison of them which are endued with superior degrees of excellence. Thus archangels are perfect as archangels, but imperfect in comparison of Jesus Christ. Angels are perfect as angels, but imperfect in comparison of archangels. Enoch, Elijah, and the saints who arose with our Lord, are perfect as glorified saints; and, in comparison of them, the departed spirits of just men made perfect continue in a state of imperfection: for the risen saints are glorified in body and soul, but the mouldered bodies of departed saints, not having yet felt the power of Christ's resurrection, are still under the

power of corruption. Imperfect as St. Paul and St. John are now, in comparison of Enoch, Elijah, and the twenty-four elders so often mentioned by St. John ; yet they are far more perfect than when they were pressed down by a corruptible body, under which they *groaned being burdened* : for the disembodied spirits of *just men made perfect* are more perfect than the most perfect Christians, who are yet in a *body dead because of sin*. And, as among rich men some are richer than others : or among tall men, some are taller than others ; so among perfect Christians, some are more perfect than others.

According to the gradation which belongs to all the works of God ; and according to the doctrine of the dispensations of divine grace ; the least perfect of all perfect Christians is more perfect than the most perfect Jew ; yea, than John the Baptist, whose dispensation linked together Judaism and Christianity. Or, to speak the language of our Lord, *He that is the least in the [Christian] kingdom of God, is greater than John* ; though John himself was *the greatest born of a woman* under any preceding dispensation. By the same rule, he that is perfect under the Jewish dispensation, is more perfect than he that is only perfect according to the dispensation of the Gentiles.

The standard of these different perfections is fixed in the Scriptures. To *fear God and work righteousness*, i. e. to do to others as we would be done to, from the principle of the fear of God, is the standard of a Gentile's perfection. The standard of a Jew's perfection with respect to morality may be seen in Deut. xxvii. 14—26. and in Ps. xv. And, with respect to devotion, it is fixed in Ps. cxix. The whole of this *perfection* is thus summed up by Micah :—*O Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

The perfection of infant Christianity, which is called in the Scriptures *the baptism of John*, is thus described by John and by Christ :—*He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, &c. If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast, give to the poor, and follow me.—If any man come to me, and hate not [i. e. is not willing for my sake to leave] his father and mother, his wife and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

With respect to adult, perfect Christianity, which is consequent upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost administered by Christ himself, its perfection is described in the sermon upon the Mount, in 1 Cor. xiii. and in all those parts of the Epistles, where the apostles exhort believers to walk agreeably to *the glorious liberty of God's children*.

The perfection of disembodied spirits is thus described by a *voice from heaven*:—*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, [not from their sins; this they did before death:] and their works follow them.*—And the complete perfection of glorified saints is thus described by St. John and St. Paul.—*They shall live and reign with Christ in a city wherein there is no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the city hath no need of the sun to shine in it, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*—*And there shall be no curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever, in glorified bodies.*—*For this corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.*—*It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: as is the heavenly Adam, such are they also that are heavenly: and as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: but the spiritual, i. e. the glorified body, shall inherit the heavenly Canaan.*

Persons whose orthodoxy consists in obstinately refusing to peep over the wall of prejudice; will probably say, that these observations upon the different sorts and degrees of perfection, are “novel chimeras;” and that I multiply perfections as I do justifications: “inventing them by the dozen.” To this I answer, that we advance nothing but what, we hope, recommends itself to the candour of those who have a regard for *reason and revelation*.

1. Reason tells us, that all God’s works are perfect in their places: and that some having a higher place than others upon the scale of beings, they are of consequence more perfect. If Mr. Hill will not believe it, we appeal to his *banker*, and ask, if there is not an essential difference between the metallic perfection of brass, that of silver, and that of gold?—We appeal to his *jeweller*, and ask, if the perfection of an agate is not inferior to that of an emerald—the perfection of a ruby, to that of a diamond; and if some diamonds cannot be said to be more perfect than others?—We appeal to his *gardener*, and ask if a blackberry is not inferior to a strawberry, a strawberry to a nectarine, a nectarine to a pine-apple: and if nevertheless those various fruits have not each their perfection?—Nay, we will venture to ask his *under-gardener*, if the perfection of the fruit does not imply the perfection of the blossom; if the perfection of the blos-

some does not presuppose that of the bud ; and if a bud, whose perfection is destroyed by the frost in March, is likely to produce perfect blossoms in May, and perfect fruit in October ?

Should the fear of becoming a perfectionist make Mr. Hill refuse his assent to these obvious truths, we will address him as a *Master of Arts*, a gentleman who is versed in Natural Philosophy, as well as in Calvinism. Is it absurd to say, that some just men rise progressively from the perfection of a lower to the perfection of a higher dispensation in the spiritual world ?—Do we not see a similar promotion, even among the basest classes of animals in the natural world ? Consider that beautiful *insect*, which exults to display its crown, and to expand its wings in the sun. Will you not say that it is a *perfect butterfly* ? Nevertheless three weeks ago it was a *perfect aurelia*, quietly sleeping in its silken tomb. Some months before it was a *perfect silkworm*, busily preparing itself for another state of existence, by spinning and weaving its shroud. And had you seen it a year ago, you would have seen nothing but a *perfect egg*. Thus in one year, it has experienced three grand changes, which may be called *metamorphoses*, *births*, or *conversions*. Each change was perfect in its kind : and nevertheless, the last is as far superior to the first, as a beautiful, flying butterfly exceeds a black, crawling worm ; and such a worm, the invisible seed of life, that lies dormant in the diminutive egg of an insect.

2. Scripture and experience do not support our doctrine of the difference of perfections, less than reason and philosophy. We read, Gen. vi. 9. that *Noah was a just man; and perfect in his generation*. We read also, Job i. 1. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect*. Now whatever the perfection of *Noah* and *Job* consisted in, it is evident that it was not *Jewish* perfection : for the perfection of *Judaism* requires the sacrament of circumcision, and Mr. Hill will hardly say, that men were circumcised in the land of *Uz*, and before the flood. Hence I conclude that *Noah* and *Job* had attained the perfection of *Gentilism*, and not that of *Judaism*.

Again : *Mark the perfect man, says David, for his end is peace*. No doubt he spake this of the perfect Jew ; and such were, I think, *Moses*, *Samuel*, and *Daniel* ; if Mr. Hill will not allow it, I produce *Simeon*, or *Anna*, or *Zacharias* and *Elisabeth*, who were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless. Luke i. 16. Now these excellent Jews were not perfect according to the dispensation of *John the Baptist* ; for water baptism was not less essential to a perfect disciple of *John*, than circumcision was to a perfect

disciple of Moses, and they, or some of them, probably died long before John opened his dispensation by *preaching the baptism of repentance*.

Once more : John the Baptist was undoubtedly perfect according to his own dispensation ; his penitential severity, his great reputation for holiness, and the high encomium which our Lord passed upon him, naturally lead us to conclude it. But that he was not a perfect Christian is evident from the following considerations : 1. Our Lord said, that *the least in the [Christian kingdom] of God* should be greater than John.—2. John himself confessed the imperfection of his baptism, or dispensation, in comparison of the perfection of Christ's baptism and spiritual dispensation : *I have need to be baptized of thee*, said he to Christ, *and comest thou to me?* And to his disciples he said, *I indeed baptize you with water, but he [the Lamb of God] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*—3. John was beheaded before Christ was crucified ; and the outpouring of the Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, did not begin till after Christ's ascension ; the apostle St. John having particularly mentioned, that *the Holy Ghost was not yet given*, or that the full dispensation of the Spirit was not opened, *because Jesus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39 : an important observation this, which is confirmed by Christ's own words to his disciples, John xvi. 7. *I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you : [the full dispensation of the Holy Ghost shall not be opened :] but if I depart, I will send him to you.* Agreeably to this, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father [i. e. the promised Spirit] which, says he, ye have heard of me : for John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And when they had thus been baptized, they began to preach the full baptism of Christ, which has two branches, the baptism of water, and the baptism of the Spirit, or of celestial fire. Therefore, when the penitent Jews asked, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Peter answered, *Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost : for the promise of it is unto you, and unto your children, and to all that are afar off ; even as many as the Lord our God shall call to the perfection of the Christian dispensation :—And we are witnesses of these things ; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God [since the day of Pentecost] hath given to them that obey him, i. e. to obedient believers.* Compare Acts ii. 38. and v. 32. with John vii. 39.

From the preceding reasons we conclude, that the case of John the Baptist was as singular as that of Moses. Moses knew Joshua, and pointed him out, as the man who was to lead the Israelites into the

land of promise : but Moses died before Joshua opened the way. Thus Moses saw the good land : he was not far from the typical kingdom of God ; but he did not enter into it. In like manner, the Baptist knew Christ, and pointed him out as the wonderful person who was to introduce believers into the spiritual kingdom of God. But John was beheaded before Christ glorified opened his peculiar kingdom. Thus John saw the kingdom of heaven : he was not far from it. But yet he did not enter into it. He died ■ *just man, made perfect* according to his own incomplete dispensation, but not according to the dispensation of Christ and his Spirit. This was the Baptist's grief, not his guilt : for he earnestly desired to be baptized of Christ with the Holy Ghost ; but the Holy Ghost was not yet given in the Christian measure. The gift of the Spirit was rather distilled as a dew, than poured out as a shower : because *Jesus was not yet glorified* ; but now, that he is ascended up on high to receive that unspeakable gift for men in its fulness :—now that the promise of the Father is fulfilled to all who plead it aright ; we are culpable, if we rest satisfied with the inferior manifestations of the Spirit, which belong to the baptism of John, or to infant Christianity ; and we act in an unchristianlike manner, if we ridicule the kingdom of the Holy Ghost, and speak evil of *perfect Christianity*.

To return : a perfect *Gentile* sees God in his works and providences : but, wanting a more particular manifestation of his existence and goodness, he sighs, *O where shall I find him?*—A perfect *Jew* ardently expects his coming as Messiah and Emmanuel, or *God with us* ; and he groans, *O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!*—A perfect *Disciple of John* believes that the Messiah is come in the flesh, and prays, *O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, restore the kingdom to a waiting Israelite : baptize me with the Holy Ghost : fill me with the Spirit.*—And perfect Christians can witness, from blessed experience, that he who was manifest in the flesh, is come in the Spirit's power to establish within them his gracious kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.

In this blessed kingdom, St. Paul lived, when he said, *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.* Nevertheless, though he was not only a perfect Christian, but also able to *preach wisdom among them that were perfect*, he justly acknowledges himself imperfect in knowledge, in comparison of perfectly glorified saints. *We know but in part*, says he, *but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away : for now we see through a glass darkly, but when we shall drop these dark veils of flesh and blood, and be*

clothed with celestial, incorruptible bodies, we shall be capable of beholding God, *we shall see him face to face.* 1 Cor. xiii. 9, &c. For though we are now the sons of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, *for we shall see him as he is.* 1 John iii. 2.

It is of this *final* perfecting of the saints in the day of the resurrection, that the apostle writes to the Hebrews, where he says, *These having all obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise* which relates to the full perfection of the just: *God having provided some better things for us* [Christians] *that they* [the Jewish saints] *without us should not be made perfect,* [i. e. that we should all be perfected in glory together.]—*For we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible) and we, who shall have died, or shall then be found living in a state of initial perfection, shall be changed.* Heb. xi. 39. 1 Cor. xv. 51.

Nor does it follow from hence, that all glorified saints shall be equally perfect. I cannot but embrace here the reasonable sentiment of Dr. Watts. “The worship of heaven,” says that judicious divine, “and the joy that attends it, may be exceedingly different in degrees, according to the different capacities in spirits; and yet all may be perfect, and free from sinful defects. Does not the sparrow praise its Maker upon the ridge of a cottage, chirping in its native perfection? And yet the lark advances, in her flight and song, as far above the sparrow as the clouds are above the housetop. Surely superior joys and glories must belong to superior powers and services. The word *perfection* does not always imply *equality*. If all the souls in heaven be of one mould, make, and inclination; yet there may be different sizes of capacity even in the same genus, and a different degree of preparation for the same delights; therefore should all the spirits of the just be uniform in their natures and pleasures, and all perfect; yet one spirit may possess more happiness and glory than another, because it is more capacious of intellectual blessings, and better prepared for them. So when vessels of various size are thrown into the same ocean, there will be a great difference in the quantity of the liquid which they receive; though all may be full to the brim, and all made of the richest metal.” *Watts on the Happiness of Separate Spirits.*

Having thus proved, both by reason and Scripture, that there are various sorts and degrees of perfection; and that a man may be *perfect* according to the dispensation of divine grace he is under upon earth, though he be not yet perfect according to the dispensation of

divine glory, which will take place, when our mortal bodies shall know the power of Christ's resurrection : having proved this, I say, nothing is easier than to reconcile St. Paul with himself, when he speaks in the same chapter of his *being perfect*, and of his *not being yet perfect*. For when he says, *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded*, he speaks of Christian perfection, that is, of the maturity of grace and holiness, which men, still burdened with corruptible flesh and blood, arrive at under the full dispensation of the Gospel of Christ. But when he says, *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, &c.* he speaks of his perfection as a candidate for a crown of martyrdom on earth, and for a crown of glory in heaven. Just as if he said, Though I am dead to sin and perfected in love :—though I live not, but Christ liveth in me ; yet I am not satisfied with my present perfection ; I want to be perfected like Christ. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and [then] to enter into his glory ? Luke xxiv. 26. I want, in short, to be perfected in suffering, as well as in love. I cannot, I will not rest till I end my race of pain and shame, and know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings on the ignominious tree. I am filled with a noble ambition of dying a martyr for him ; being persuaded that this perfection of sufferings will ripen me for my heavenly perfection,—the perfection to which I shall be raised at the resurrection of the just.

That this was the apostle's meaning when he denied his *being already made perfect*, will, I hope, appear indubitable to those who consider the context. The words which immediately precede St. Paul's observation, that *he had not yet attained*, express a pathetic wish of sharing both in Christ's exaltation, by a glorious resurrection, and in his humiliation by perfect sufferings. *That I may know him*, as he says, *and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his painful, ignominious death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead*, which is the full perfection of the human nature ; and secure a part in the first resurrection of the just, in which martyrs will be peculiarly interested ; witness this plain Scripture, *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, &c. and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years : but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection.* Rev. xx. 4, &c.

But I repeat it, although St. Paul disclaimed his having yet attained a perfection of *shame and glory*, he nevertheless professed his having attained a perfection of Christian faith working by love. This is

evident from the words that follow the controverted text : *This one thing I do, &c. I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, [which is my complete glorification in heaven.] Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect [in faith and love] be thus minded. Let us press after our perfection of suffering here, and of glory hereafter ;—a bodily perfection this, which the apostle describes thus at the end of the chapter ;—We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Phil. iii. 21.* Hence it appears, if we are not strangely mistaken, that it is not less absurd to oppose our doctrine of *Christian perfection* from Phil. iii. than to oppose the divinity of Christ from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel.

I shall conclude these remarks upon the various sorts of perfection, by an observation which may help Mr. Hill to understand how St. Paul could be *perfect in love*, when he professed that he was not perfect either in *glory, knowledge, or sufferings*.

Had not our Lord been *perfect in love* from a child, he would have broken the two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. But *in him was no sin*: therefore he was *perfect in love*, though his love admitted of an increase, as well as his wisdom and knowledge ; just as a perfect bud admits of a growth into a perfect blossom, and such a blossom into a perfect fruit. Hence it is, that as our Lord's perfect love grew, *he increased in favour with God and man* ; an additional degree of approbation being due to him from all rationals, upon every display of his growing perfection. Luke i. 52. But, though our Lord was always *perfect in love*, yet, it is certain that he was not always *perfect in sufferings*, much less in glory, for he was not perfected in sufferings till after he had expired between the two thieves ; nor was he perfected in glory before he took his place at the right hand of God. This is evidently the apostle's doctrine, where he says, *It became him by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings. Heb. ii. 10.* And again, chap. v. 8. *Though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered : and being made perfect [in sufferings and in glory] he became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* Mr. Hill must then allow that St. Paul's imperfection with respect to *sufferings and glory*, was no obstacle to the perfection of his love ; or he must assert, that Christ was *sinfully imperfect in love*, so long as he continued imperfect in *sufferings and glory*,—a supposition this which is too horrible to be admitted by a merely nominal Christian, much more by Mr. Hill.

SECTION VII.

St. Paul was not carnal, and sold under sin.—The true meaning of Gal. v. 17. and of Rom. vii. 14. &c. is opened consistently with the context, the Design of the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans, and the privileges of Christians and the Doctrine of Perfection.

IT is easier to raise dust than to answer an argument. I expect, therefore, that our opponents, instead of solidly answering the contents of the preceding section, will assert that St. Paul was an avowed enemy to deliverance from evil tempers before death, and of consequence a strong opposer of the doctrine of Christian Perfection. And to support their assertion, they will probably quote the following text: *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Gal. v. 17. For they conclude from these words, that, so long as we dwell in bodies of corruptible flesh, we cannot help breaking the law of liberty, (at least from time to time) by sinful, internal lusts. As this objection passes among them for unanswerable, it may not be amiss to give it a four-fold answer.

1. St. Paul wrote these words to the *carnal, fallen* Galatians. To them he said, *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would*: and there was a good reason why *they could not do what they had a weak desire to do.* They were bewitched by the flesh, and by carnal teachers, who led them from the power of the Spirit to the weakness of the letter; yea, to the letter of Judaism too. But did he not speak of himself to the Philippians in a very different strain? Did he not declare, *I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me?* And cannot every believer, who steadily walks in the Spirit, say the same thing? Who does not see the flaw of this argument? The *disobedient, fallen, bewitched* believers of Galatia, of whom St. Paul stood in doubt, could not but fulfil the lusts of the flesh, when they were led by the flesh: *Neither hot nor cold*, like the Laodiceans, they could neither be perfect Christians nor perfect worldlings, because they fully sided neither with the Spirit nor with the flesh: or to use the apostle's words, *they could not do the things that they would*, through the opposition which the flesh made against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; neither of these principles being yet fully victorious in their halting, distracted hearts:—Therefore this must be also

the miserable case of all obedient, faithful, established believers through all ages all the world over ! What has this Antinomian conclusion to do with the scriptural premises ? . When I assert that those who have put out their knees cannot run a race swiftly, do I so much as intimate that no man can be a swift racer ?

2. It is as unscriptural to judge of the power and liberty of established believers, by the power and liberty of the Galatians ; as it is unreasonable to judge of the liberty of a free nation, by the servitude of a half-enslaved people ; or of the strength of a vigorous child, by the weakness of a half-formed embryo. I found this remark ; (1.) Upon Gal. v. 1. where the apostle indirectly reproves his Judaizing, wrangling converts, for being fallen from *the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and for being entangled again with the yoke of bondage : and (2.) Upon Gal. iv. 19. *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.* The dawn of day is not more different from the meridian light, than the imperfect state described in this verse is different from the perfect state described in the following lines, which are descriptive of the adult Christian ; *I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God*, Gal. ii. 20.

3. The sense which is commonly fixed upon the text produced by our opponents, is entirely overturned by the context : read the preceding verse, and you will find a glorious, though conditional promise of the liberty which we plead for : *This I say, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the [sinful] lust of the flesh* ; that is, far from harbouring either outward or inward sin, ye shall, with myself, and as many as are perfect, steadily keep your body under, and be in every thing spiritually minded, which is *life and peace*.

4. We should properly distinguish between the *lawful* and the *sinful* lusts or desires of the flesh. To desire to eat, to drink, to sleep, to marry, to rest, to shun pain at proper times and in a proper manner, is no sin : such lusts or desires are not contrary to the law of liberty. Our Lord himself properly indulged most of these harmless propensities of the flesh, without ceasing to be the immaculate Lamb of God. Hence it is, that our Church requires us in our baptism to renounce only “the sinful lusts of the flesh ;” giving us a tacit leave *lawfully* to indulge its *lawful* appetites. I should be glad, for example, to recruit my strength by one hour’s sleep, or by an ounce of food ; as well as by a good night’s rest, or a good meal : but the *flesh* harmlessly *lusteth* against the Spirit : so that in these, and in a thousand such instances, *I cannot do the things that I would*.

But do I commit sin when I use my body according to its nature? Nay, if I were as strongly solicited unlawfully to indulge the lawful appetites of my flesh, as Christ was to turn stones into bread when he felt keen hunger in the wilderness; would not such a temptation increase the glory of my victory, rather than the number of my sins? Is it right in our opponents to avail themselves of the vague, unfixed meaning of the words *flesh* and *lust*, to make the simple believe that, so long as we have human *flesh* about us, and *bodily appetites* within us, our hearts must necessarily remain pregnant with sinful *lusts*, and we shall “*have innumerable lusts* [as says an imperfectionist whom I shall soon mention] *swarming about our hearts?*” Does not this doctrine put a worm at the root of *Christian liberty*, while it nourishes *Antinomian freedom*;—a freedom to sin, even to adultery and murder, without ceasing to be *sinless* and *perfect* in Christ?

5. Two lines after St. Paul’s supposed plea for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in believers, the apostle begins a long enumeration of the *works of the flesh*, of the which, says he, *I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things, or admit in their hearts such lusts, as hatred, variance, strife, or envyings, shall not inherit the kingdom of God: whereas, they that are Christ’s* [they that are led by the Spirit of God, for in St. Paul’s account only such are Christ’s, i. e. properly belong to Christ’s spiritual dispensation, Rom. viii. 9, 14.] *have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts*, Gal. v. 24. Now these spiritual believers, *can do all things through Christ*: and accordingly the apostle observes, that far from bearing the fruit of the flesh, they bear the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.—The whole cluster of inherent graces which makes up Christian perfection; and then he observes, that *The law is not against such* [because they fulfil it:] *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Gal. v. 14—23.

6. The sense which the Imperfectionists give to Gal. v. 17. is not only flatly contrary to the rest of the chapter, but to the end and design of all the epistle. What the apostle has chiefly in view through the whole, is to reprove the Galatians for their carnality in following Judaizing teachers, and in bearing the fruits of the flesh, *envy, variance, &c.* insomuch that they were ready to bite and devour one another. Now, if when he had sharply reprov’d them, as persons *who ended in the flesh*, after having begun in the Spirit, he had written Gal. v. 17. in the sense of our opponents, he would fairly have excused these bewitched men, absolutely defeated his reproof, and

absurdly furnished them with an excellent plea to continue in their bad course of life. For if they could not *fulfil the law of Christ*, but must remain carnal and sold under indwelling sin, had they not a right to answer the apostle thus : “ If neither we, whom thou callest *bewitched Galatians*, nor any spiritual believer, can possibly do the things we should and would do, because the flesh sinfully and unavoidably lusteth against the Spirit ; why dost thou blame us for our carnality ? Why dost thou take us to task rather than other believers ? Are we not all bound by adamant chains of carnal necessity, to break the law of Christ so long as we are in the body ? Art thou not the very man who givest us to understand that *we cannot do what we should and would do, because the flesh, which we cannot possibly part with before death, lusteth against the Spirit ?* And is not *absolute necessity* the best excuse in the world ?

7. Should Mr. Hill ask : What is then the genuine meaning of Galatians v. 17. ? We reply, that when we consider that verse in the light of the context, we do not doubt but the sense of it is fairly expressed in the following lines. “ The flesh and the Spirit are two contrary principles. *They that are in, or walk after, the flesh, cannot please God. And ye are undoubtedly in the flesh, and walk after the flesh, while ye bite and devour one another. This I say then, walk in the Spirit : be led by the Spirit : and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh, as ye now do. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and prevails in all carnal people ; and the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and prevails in all spiritual people ; and these two, far from nestling together, as Antinomian teachers make you believe, are contrary to each other. They are irreconcilable enemies : so that, as obedient, spiritual believers, while they are led by the Spirit, cannot do what they would do, if they were led by the flesh : ye bewitched, carnal, disobedient Galatians, who are led by the flesh, cannot do what ye would do, if ye were led by the Spirit, and what ye have still some desire to do, so far as ye have not yet absolutely quenched the Spirit. Would ye then return to your liberty ? Return to your duty : change your guide : forsake the carnal mind : let Christ be formed in you : be led by the Spirit ; so shall ye fulfil the law of Christ ; and it shall no more condemn you, than the law of Moses binds you. For if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the curse of the law : ye are equally free from the bondage of the Mosaic law, and from the condemnation of the law of Christ.*” Gal. v. 16, 17, 18.

8. Should Mr. Hill say, “ That by the flesh he understands not only the body, but also the *natural desires, appetites, and aversions, which are necessarily excited in the soul, in consequence of its*

intimate union with the body; and that the body of sin must needs live and die with the body which our spirit inhabits; because, so long as we continue in the body, we are unavoidably tried by a variety of situations, passions, inclinations, aversions, and infirmities, which burden us, hinder us from doing and suffering all we could wish to do and to suffer, and occasion our doing or feeling what we should be glad in some respects not to do or feel."

I answer: it is excessively wrong to conclude, that all these burdens, infirmities, appetites, passions, and aversions, are those *sinful workings* of our corrupt nature, which are sometimes called *the flesh*.—You cannot continue a whole day in deep prostration of body and soul, nor perhaps one hour upon your knees: your stomach involuntarily rises at the sight of some food which some persons esteem delicious: your strength fails in outward works: your spirits are exhausted; you faint or sleep, when others are active and toil: you need the spiritual and bodily cordials which others can administer: perhaps also you are afflicted with disagreeable sensations in the outward man, through the natural, necessary play of the various springs which belong to flesh and blood: your just grief vents itself in tears: your zeal for God is attended with a proper anger at sin, nay, misapplying what the apostle says of the carnal man under the law, you may declare with great truth, the extensive good I would, I do not; and the accidental evil I would not, that I do: I would convert every sinner, relieve every distressed object, and daily visit every sick bed in the kingdom, but I cannot do it. I would never try the patience of my friends, never stir up the envy of my rivals, never excite the malice of my enemies; but I cannot help doing this undesigned evil, as often as I strongly exert myself in the discharge of my duty.

If you say, "All these things, or most of them, are quite inconsistent with the perfection you contend for;" I ask; upon this footing was not our Lord himself imperfect? Did his bodily strength never fail in agonizing prayer, or intense labour? Did his animal spirits always move with the same sprightliness? Do we not read of his sleeping in the ship, when his disciples wrestled with a tempestuous sea? Did he not fulfil the precept, *Be ye angry and sin not*? Had he not the troublesome sensation of grief at Lazarus's grave,—of hunger in the wilderness—of weariness at Jacob's well—and of thirst upon the cross? If he was *made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and tempted in all things as we are*; is it not highly probable, that he was not an utter stranger to the other natural appetites, and uneasy sensations which are incident to flesh and blood? Is it a sin to feel them?

Is it not rather a virtue wholly to deny them, or not to gratify them out of the line of duty, or not to indulge them in an excessive manner in that line? Again: did not his holy flesh testify a natural, innocent abhorrence to suffering? Did not his sacred body faint in the garden? Were not his spirits so depressed, that he stood in need of the strengthening assistance of an angel? Did he do all the good he would? To suppose that he wished not the conversion of his friends and brethren, is to suppose him totally devoid of natural affection; but were they all converted? Did you never read, *Neither did his brethren believe in him: and his friends went out to lay hold on him: for they said, he is beside himself?* To conclude: did he not accidentally stir up the evil he would not, when he gave occasion to the envy of the Pharisees—the scorn of Herod—the fears of Pilate—the rage of the Jewish mob? And when he prayed, that the bitter cup might pass from him, if it were possible, did he not manifest a resigned desire to escape sin and shame? If every such desire be indwelling sin, or the flesh *sinfully* lusting against the spirit, did he not go through the sinful conflict, as well as those whom we call perfect men in Christ? And consequently did he not fall at once from the mediatorial, Adamic, and Christian perfection; indwelling sin being equally inconsistent with all these kinds of perfection?—What true believer does not shudder at the bare supposition? And if our *sinless* Lord felt the weakness of the flesh harmlessly lusting against the *willingness* of the spirit, according to his own doctrine, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*, is it not evident, that the conflict we speak of (if the spirit maintains its superior, victorious lusting against the flesh, and by that mean steadily keeps the flesh in its proper place) is it not evident, I say, that this conflict is no more inconsistent with Christian perfection, than suffering, agonizing, fainting, crying, and dying, which were the lot of our *sinless, perfect* Saviour to the last?

If I am not greatly mistaken, the preceding remarks prove; 1. That when our opponents pretend to demonstrate the *necessary* indwelling of sin in all believers from Gal. v. 16. they wretchedly tear that text from the context, to make it speak a language which St. Paul abhors.—2. That this text, fairly taken together with the context, and the design of the whole epistle, is a proof that obedient, spiritual believers, can do what the bewitched Galatians could not do: that is, they can *crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts*, and walk as perfect Christians who utterly destroy the whole body of sin, and *fulfil the law of Christ*.—And 3. That to produce Gal. v. against the doctrine of Christian perfection, is full as absurd as to quote the sermon upon the mount in defence of Antinomian delusions.—I have

dwelt so long upon this head, because I have before me * *An Essay on Galatians* v. 17. lately published by an ingenious divine, who takes it for granted that the apostle contends, in this verse, for the necessary indwelling of sin.

Mr. Hill will probably say, "That he does not rest the doctrine of Christian imperfection so much upon the experience of the fallen Galatians, as upon that of St. Paul himself, who, in Romans vii. frankly acknowledges, that he was still a wretched, carnal man, sold under sin, and serving with the flesh the law of sin. Whence it follows, that it is high presumption in modern believers to aspire at more perfection, and a greater freedom from sin upon earth, than had been attained by St. Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles, but laboured more abundantly than they all."—To this common objection I answer:

1. The perfection we preach is nothing but perfect repentance, perfect faith, and perfect love, productive of the gracious tempers which St. Paul himself describes, 1 Cor. xiii. We see those blessed tempers shining through his epistles, discourses, and conduct; and I have proved in the preceding section that he himself professed Christian perfection. This objection therefore appears to us an ungenerous attempt to make St. Paul grossly contradict himself.—For what can be more ungenerous, than to take advantage of a figurative mode of expression, to blast a good man's character, and to traduce him as a slave of his fleshly lusts, a drudge to carnality, a wretch sold under sin? What would Mr. Hill think of me, if, under the plausible pretence of magnifying God's grace to the chief of sinners, and of proving that there is no deliverance from sin in this life, I made the following speech?

"The more we grow in grace, the more clearly we see our sins: and the more willingly we acknowledge them to God and men. This is abundantly verified by the confessions that the most holy men have made of their wickedness. Paul himself, holy Paul, is not ashamed to humble himself for the sins which he committed even after his conversion. *I robbed other churches, says he, taking wages of them to do you service,* 2 Cor. xi. 8. Hence it appears, that the apostle had agreed to serve some churches for a proper salary: but, being carnal, and sold under sin, he broke his word; he fleeced, but refused to feed, the flocks; and robbing the churches, he went to the Corinthians, perhaps to see what he could get of them also in the end; for

* The arguments by which the doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers till death, as supported in that *Essay*, will be considered in Sect. XIV.

the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Jeremiah xvii. 9. Nay, partial as he was to those Corinthians, for whom he turned church-robber, he showed that his love to them was not sinless and free from rage? for once he threatened to come to them *with a rod*; and he gave one of them to *Satan for the destruction of the flesh*. With great propriety, therefore, did holy Paul say to the last, *I am the chief of sinners*. And now when the chief of the apostles abases himself thus before God, and publicly testifies, both by his words and works, that there is *no deliverance from sin, no perfection in this life*: who can help being frightened at the Pharisaic pride of the men, who dare inculcate the doctrine of sinless perfection?"

I question if Mr. Hill himself, upon reading this ungenerous and absurd, though in one sense scriptural plea, for St. Paul's *imperfection*, would not be as much out of conceit with my fictitious explanation of 2 Cor. xi. as I am with his Calvinistic exposition of Rom. vii. Nor do I think it more criminal to represent the apostle as a church-robber, than to traduce him as a *wretched, carnal man, sold under sin*:—another Ahab, that is, a man who did *evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him*.

2. St. Paul no more professes himself actually a carnal man in Rom. vii. 7. than he professes himself actually a liar in Rom. iii. 7. where he says, *But if the truth of God has more abounded through my lie, why am I judged as a sinner?*—He no more professes himself a man *actually sold under sin*, than St. James and his fellow-believers profess themselves a generation of vipers, and actual cursers of men, when the one wrote and the others read, *The tongue can no man tame:—it is full of deadly poison:—therewith curse we men*. When St. Paul reproves the partiality of some of the Corinthians to this or that preacher, he introduces Apollos and himself: though it seems that his reproof was chiefly intended for other preachers, who fomented a party spirit in the corrupted church of Corinth. And then he says, *These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos, for your sakes: that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written. 1 Cor. iv. 6.*—By the same figure he says of himself, what he might have said of any other man, or of all mankind: *Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass*. Thrice in three verses he speaks of *his not having charity*: and suppose he had done it three hundred times, this would no more have proved that he was really *uncharitable*, than his saying, Rom. vii. *I am sold under sin*, proves that he *served the law of sin with his body, as a slave is forced to serve the master who bought him*.

3. It frequently happens also, that by a figure of rhetoric which is called *Hypotyposis*, writers relate things past or things to come in the present tense ; that their narration may be more lively, and may make a stronger impression. Thus Gen. vi. 17. we read, *Behold, I, even I do bring* [i. e. I will bring 120 years hence] *a flood upon the earth to destroy all flesh*.—Thus also 2 Sam. xxii. 1, 35, 48. *When the Lord had delivered David out of the hands of all his enemies, and given him peace in all his borders, he spake the words of this song*.—*He teacheth* [i. e. he taught] *my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is* [i. e. was] *broken by mine arms*:—*It is God that avengeth* [i. e. that hath avenged] *me*—*and that bringeth* [i. e. has brought] *me forth from mine enemies*. A thousand such expressions, or this figure continued through a thousand verses, would never prove, before unprejudiced persons, that King Saul was alive, and that David was not yet delivered for good out of his bloody hands. Now if St. Paul, by a similar figure, which he carries throughout part of a chapter, relates his past experience in the present tense:—If the Christian apostle, to humble himself, and to make his description more lively, and the opposition between the bondage of sin and Christian liberty more striking:—If the apostle, I say, with such a design as this, appears upon the stage of instruction in his old Jewish dress, a dress this, in which he could serve God day and night, and yet, like another Ahab, breathe threatenings and slaughter against God's children : and if in this dress he says, *I am carnal, sold under sin, &c.* is it not ridiculous to measure his growth as an apostle of Christ by the standard of his stature when he was a Jewish bigot, a fiery zealot, full of good meanings and bad performances ?

4. To take a scripture out of the context, is often like taking the stone that binds an arch out of its place : you know not what to make of it. Nay, you may put it to an use quite contrary to that for which it was intended. This our opponents do, when they so take Rom. vii. out of its connexion with Rom. vi. and Rom. viii. as to make it mean the very reverse of what the apostle designed. St. Paul, in Romans fifth and sixth, and in the beginning of the seventh chapter, describes *the glorious liberty of the children of God* under the Christian dispensation. And as a skilful painter puts shades in his picture to heighten the effect of the lights, so the judicious apostle introduces in the latter part of Rom. vii. a lively description of the domineering power of sin, and of the intolerable burden of guilt:—a burden this, which he had so severely felt, when the convincing Spirit charged sin home upon his conscience after he had broken his good resolutions ; but especially during the three days of his blindness and fasting at Damas-

cus. Then he groaned, *O wretched man that I am, &c.* hanging night and day between despair and hope, between unbelief and faith, between bondage and freedom, till God brought him into Christian liberty by the ministry of Ananias;—of this liberty the apostle gives us a farther and fuller account in Rom. viii. Therefore the description of the man who groans under the galling yoke of sin, is brought in merely by contrast, to set off the amazing difference there is between the bondage of sin, and the liberty of Gospel holiness; just as the generals who entered Rome in triumph, used to make a show of the prince whom they had conquered. On such occasions the conqueror rode in a triumphal chariot, crowned with laurel; while the captive king followed him on foot, loaded with chains, and making, next to the conqueror, the most striking part of the show. Now, if in a Roman triumph, some of the spectators had taken the chained king on foot for the victorious general in the chariot, because the one immediately followed the other, they would have been guilty of a mistake not unlike that of our opponents, who take the carnal Jew, sold under sin, and groaning as he goes along, for the Christian believer, who walks in the Spirit, exults in the liberty of God's children, and always triumphs in Christ.

5. To see the propriety of the preceding observation, we need only take notice of the contrariety there is between the bondage of the carnal penitent, described Rom. vii. 14, &c. and the liberty of the spiritual man, described in the beginning of that very chapter.—The one says, *Who shall deliver me?—Sin revives:—It works in him all manner of concupiscence—yea, it works death in him:—he is carnal—sold under sin—forced by his bad habits to what he is ashamed of—and kept from doing what he sees his duty.—In him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing—Sin dwelleth in him.—How to perform that which is good he finds not.* Though he has a desire to be better, yet still he does not do good—he does evil—evil is present with him. His inward man, his reason and conscience approve, yea, delight in God's law, i. e. in that which is right; but still he does it not; his good resolutions are no sooner made than they are broken; for another law in his members wars against the law of his mind, that is, his carnal appetites oppose the dictates of his conscience, and bring him into captivity to the law of sin; so that, like a poor chained slave, he has just liberty enough to rattle his chains, and to say, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, from this complete assemblage of corruption, misery, and death!* Is it not ridiculous to conclude, that, because this groaning slave has now and then a hope of deliverance, and at times thanks God through Jesus

Christ for that hope ; he is actually a partaker of the liberty which is thus described in the beginning of the chapter ? Ye are become dead to the law [the Mosaic dispensation] that ye should be married to him, who is raised from the dead, that [instead of omitting to do good, and doing evil,] we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, [in the state of the carnal man sold under sin,—a sure proof this that the apostle was no more in that state] the motions of sin which were by the law [abstracted from the Gospel promise] did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the [curse of the moral, as well as from the bondage of the Mosaic] law, that being dead wherein we were held : that we should serve God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6. Immediately after this glorious profession of liberty, the apostle, in his own person, by way of contrast, describes to the end of the chapter, the poor, lame, sinful obedience of those, who serve God in the oldness of the letter : so that nothing can be more unreasonable than to take this description for a description of the obedience of those who serve God in the newness of the spirit. We have therefore in Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6. ■ strong rampart against the mistake which our opponents build on the rest of the chapter.

6. This mistake will appear still more astonishing, if we read Rom. vi. where the apostle particularly describes the liberty of those who serve God in newness of the spirit, according to the glorious privileges of the new covenant. Is darkness more contrary to light than the preceding description of the carnal Jew is to the following description of the spiritual Christian. *How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein ! Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we might not serve sin. [Note : the carnal Jew, though against his conscience, still “ serves the law of sin,” Rom. vii. 25.] Now he that is dead is freed from sin.—Reckon ye yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin.—Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead. [Note : the carnal Jew says, Sin revived, and I died, Rom. vii. 9. but the spiritual Christian is alive from the dead.]—Sin shall not have dominion over you [now you are spiritual : you need not say, “ I do the evil that I hate, and the evil I would not, that I do :”] for you are not under the law [under the weak dispensation of Moses ;] but under grace [under the powerful, gracious dispensation of Christ.]—God be thanked that [whereas] ye were the servants of sin, when you carnally served God in the oldness of the letter, ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered you : that is, ye have heartily embraced the doctrine of Christ, who gives rest to all that come to him travelling and heavy*

laden. *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness—For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness—But now being—carnal, sold under sin, ye serve the law of sin?—No: just the reverse; But now being made free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, Rom. vi. 2—22.* Is it possible to reconcile this description of Christian liberty with the preceding description of Jewish bondage? Can a man at the same time exult in the one and groan under the other? When our opponents assert it, do they not confound the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations:—the workings of the spirit of bondage, and the workings of the spirit of adoption? And yet, astonishing! they charge us with confounding *law and Gospel!*

7. We shall see their mistake in a still more glaring light, if we pass to Rom. viii. and consider the description which St. Paul continues to give us of the glorious liberty of those who have done with the oldness of the [Jewish] letter, and serve God in newness of the spirit. The poor Jew, carnally sticking in the letter, is condemned for all he does, if his conscience be awake. But *there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, who are come up to the privileges of the Christian dispensation, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus* [the power of the quickening spirit given me, and my fellow-believers, under the spiritual and perfect dispensation of Christ Jesus] *hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law* [the letter of the Mosaic dispensation] *could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law, the spiritual obedience, which the moral law of Moses, adopted by Christ, requires, might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For* [so far from professing that I am “carnal and sold under sin, I declare that] *to be carnally minded is death: [Well may then the carnal Jew groan, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!”] But to be spiritually minded is life and peace: so then, they that are in the flesh, i. e. carnal, sold under sin, cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his: he is, at best, a disciple of Moses, a poor, carnal Jew, and remains still a stranger to the glorious privileges of the Christian dispensation. But if Christ be in you, the body is dead, weak and full of the seeds of death, because of [original] sin; but the spirit is life, strong and full of immortality, because of [implanted and living] righteousness.—For ye*

have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, [like the poor, carnal man, who through fear and anguish groans out, "O wretched man that I am:"] But ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we, who walk in newness of the spirit, and please God—we, who have the Spirit of Christ, cry Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, whom we please, and joint-heirs with Christ, through whom we please God, Rom. viii. 1—17.

This glorious liberty, which God's children enjoy in their souls, under the perfection of the Christian dispensation, will one day extend to their bodies, which are dead [i. e. infirm and condemned to die] because of [original] sin. And with respect to the body only it is, that the apostle says, Rom. viii. 23. *We ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of our outward man, that is, the redemption of our body: for, with respect to the body, whose imperfection is so great a clog to the soul, we are saved by hope. In the mean time, we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.—Who shall separate us, that love God, and walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, &c. do it? Nay, in all things, much more in respect of sin and carnal-mindedness, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, Rom. viii. 23—37.*

And, that this abundant victory extends to the destruction of the carnal mind, we prove by these words of the context, *To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, they that are carnally minded, cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, ye are not carnally minded, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, and dwells as a spirit of adoption, there is constant liberty: now if any man have not that Spirit, or if he hath it only as a spirit of bondage, to make him groan, O wretched man! he may indeed be a servant of God in the land of his spiritual captivity, but he is none of Christ's freemen: he may serve God in the oldness of the letter, as a Jew; but he does not serve him in newness of the spirit, as a Christian. For I repeat it, where the Spirit of Christ is, and dwells according to the fulness of the Christian dispensation, there is a liberty, a glorious liberty, which is the very reverse of the bondage that Mr. Hill pleads for during the term of life. See Rom. viii. 14—21.*

Whether therefore we consider Rom. vii. Rom. vi. or Rom. viii. it appears indubitable, that the sense which our opponents fix upon

Rom. vii. 14, &c. is entirely contrary to the apostle's meaning, to the context, and to the design of the whole epistle, which is to extol the privileges of those *who are Christ's*, above the privileges of those who are *Noah's* or *Moses's*; or, if you please, to extol the privileges of spiritual Christians, who serve God *in newness of the spirit*, above the privileges of carnal Heathens and Jews, who serve him only *in the oldness of the letter*.

SECTION VIII.

An Answer to the Arguments, by which St. Paul's supposed Carnality is generally defended.

If the sense which our opponents give to Rom. vii. 14. be true, the doctrine of Christian perfection is a dream, and our utmost attainment on earth is, St. Paul's apostolic *carnality*, and involuntary *servitude to the law of sin*; with a hopeful prospect of deliverance in a *death purgatory*. It is therefore of the utmost importance to establish our exposition of that verse, by answering the arguments which are supposed to favour the Antinomian meaning rashly fixed upon that portion of Scripture.

ARGUMENT I. "If St. Paul was not *carnal and sold under sin* when he wrote to the Romans, why does he say, *I am carnal*? Could he not have said, *I was carnal once. but now the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death*? Can you give a good reason why, in Rom. vii. 14. the phrase, *I am carnal*, must mean, *I was carnal*? Is it right thus to substitute the *past time* for the *present*?"

ANSWER. We have already shown, that this figurative way of speaking is not uncommon in the Scriptures. We grant, however, that we ought not to depart from the literal sense of any phrase without good reasons. Several such, I trust, have already been produced, to show the necessity of taking St. Paul's words, *I am carnal*, in the sense stated in the preceding section. I shall offer one more remark upon this head, which, if I mistake not, might alone convince the unprejudiced.

The states of all souls may in general be reduced to three:—1. That of *unawakened* sinners, who quietly sleep in the chains of their sins, and dream of self-righteousness and heaven. 2. That of *awakened*, uneasy, reluctant sinners, who try in vain to break the galling chains of their sins:—And 3. That of *delivered* sinners, or

victorious believers, who enjoy the liberty of God's children. This last state is described in Rom. vii. 4, 6. The rest of that chapter is judiciously brought in, to show how the *unawakened* sinner is roused out of his carnal state, and how the *awakened* sinner is driven to Christ for liberty by the lashing and binding commandment. The apostle shows this by observing [ver. 7, &c.] how the law makes ■ sinner [or, if you please, made *him*] pass from the *unawakened* to the *awakened* state. *I had not known sin*, says he, *but by the law, &c.* When he had described his *unawakened* state without the law, and began to describe his *awakened* state under the law, nothing was more natural than to change the time or tense. But, having already used the *past tense* in the description of the first, or the *unawakened* state; and having said, *Without the law sin was dead—I was alive without the law once—Sin revived and I died, &c.* he could no more use that tense, when he began to describe the second, or the *awakened* state; I mean the state in which he found himself when the commandment had roused his sleepy conscience, and slain his Pharisaic hopes. He was therefore obliged to use another tense, and none, in that case, was fitter than the *present*: just as if he had said, "When the commandment slew the conceited Pharisee in me; when *I died* to my self-righteous hopes; I did not die without ■ groan: nor did I pass into the life of God without severe pangs: no; I struggled with earnestness, I complained with bitterness, and the language of my oppressed heart was—*I am carnal, sold under sin, &c.* to the end of the chapter.* It is therefore with the utmost rhetorical propriety, that the apostle says, *I am*, and not *I was*, carnal, &c. But rhetorical propriety is not theological exactness. David may say as ■ poet, *God was wroth, There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it*: but it would be ridiculous to take these expressions in ■ literal sense. Nor is it much less absurd to assert, that St. Paul's words, *I am carnal, sold under sin*, are to be understood of Christian and apostolic liberty.

* Some time after I had written this, looking into Dr. Doddridge's Lectures on Divinity, page 451, I was agreeably surprised to find, that what that judicious and moderate Calvinist presents as the most plausible sense of Rom. vii. 14. is exactly the sense which I defend in these pages. Take his own words. "St. Paul at first represents a man as ignorant of the law, and then insensible of sin; but afterward being acquainted with it, and then thrown into a kind of despair, by the sentence of death which it denounces, on account of sins he is now conscious of having committed; he then farther shows, that even where there is so good a disposition as to *delight in the law*, yet the motives are too weak to maintain that uniform tenor of obedience, which a good man greatly desires, and which the Gospel by its superior motives and grace does in fact produce."

ARG. II. "St. Paul says to the Corinthians, *I write not to you as to spiritual men, but as to carnal, even to babes in Christ*. Now if the Corinthians could be at once *holy*, and yet *carnal*, why could not St. Paul be at the same time an eminent apostolic saint, and a *carnal, wretched man, sold under sin?*"

ANS. 1. The Corinthians were by no means established believers in general, for the apostle concludes his last epistle to them, by bidding them *examine themselves whether they were in the faith*—2. If St. Paul proved *carnal* still, and was to continue so till death, with all the body of Christian believers; why did he upbraid the Corinthians with their unavoidable carnality? Why did he wonder at it, and say, *Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envyings and strife, &c. are ye not carnal?* Might not these carnal Corinthians have justly replied, *Carnal physician, heal thyself?*—3. In the language of the apostle, *to be carnal—to be carnally minded—to walk after the flesh—not to walk after the Spirit—and to be in the flesh*, are phrases of the same import. This is evident from Rom. vii. 14. viii. 1—9: and he says directly or indirectly, that to those who are in that state, *there is condemnation; that they cannot please God; and that they are in a state of death; because, to be carnal, or carnally minded, is death*, Rom. viii. 1, 6, 8. Now, if he was *carnal* himself, does it not follow that he *could not please God*, and that he was in a state of *condemnation and death*? But how does this agree with the profession which he immediately makes of being *led by the Spirit, of walking in the Spirit, and of being made free from the law of sin and death, by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*?—4. We do not deny that the remains of the carnal mind still cleave to imperfect Christians; and that, when the expression *carnal* is softened and qualified, it may, in a low sense, be applied to such professors as those Corinthians were, to whom St. Paul said, *I could not speak to you as to spiritual*. But, could not the apostle be yet *spoken to as a spiritual man*? And does he not allow, that even in the corrupted churches of Corinth and Galatia, there were some truly spiritual men—some adult, perfect Christians? See 1 Cor. xiv. 37. and Gal. vi. 1—5. When the apostle calls the divided Corinthians *carnal*, he immediately softens the expression, by adding, *babes in Christ*: if therefore the word *carnal* is applied to St. Paul in this sense, it must follow that the apostle was but a *babe in Christ*: and if he was but a *babe*, is it not as absurd to judge of the growth of adult Christians by his growth, as to measure the stature of a man by that of an infant?—6. And lastly: the man described in Rom. vii. 14. is not only called *carnal* without any

softening, qualifying phrase : but the word *carnal* is immediately heightened by an uncommon expression—*sold under sin* ; which is descriptive of the strongest *bondage of corruption*. Thus Reason, Scripture, and Criticism agree to set this argument aside.

ARG. III. “The *carnal* man, whose cause we plead, says, Rom. vii. 20. *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me*, that is, in my unrenewed part : and therefore he might be an eminent apostolic saint in his renewed part ; and a carnal, wretched man, sold under sin, in his unrenewed part.”

ANS. 1. The apostle speaking there as a *carnal*, and yet *awakened* man, who has light enough to see his sinful habits, but not faith and resolution enough to overcome them ; his meaning is evidently this : *if I, as a carnal man, do what I, as an awakened man, would not ; it is no more I that do it*, that is, I do not do it according to my *awakened* conscience, for my conscience rises against my conduct ; *but it is sin that dwelleth in me* ; it is the tyrant sin, that has full possession of me, and mingles the dictates of my conscience no more than an inexorable taskmaster mingles the cries of an oppressed slave.

2. If the pure love of God was shed abroad in St. Paul’s heart ; and constrained him, he dwelt in love, and of consequence in God ; for St. John says, *He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.—He that is in you, is greater than he that is in the world*. Now if God dwelt in Paul by his loving Spirit, it becomes our objectors to show that an indwelling God, and indwelling sin, are one and the same thing ; or that the apostle had strangely altered his doctrine when he asked with indignation, *What concord hath Christ with Belial ?* For if *indwelling sin*, the Belial within, was necessary to nestle with Christ in St. Paul’s heart, and in the hearts of all believers, should not the apostle have rather cried out with admiration, “See how great is the concord between Christ and Belial ? They are inseparable ! They always live in the same heart together : and nothing ever parted them but what parts man and wife, that is, *death*.”

3. If a reluctance to serve the law of sin be a proof that we are holy as Paul was holy, is there not joy in heaven over the apostolic holiness of most robbers and murderers in the kingdom ? Can they not sooner or later say, “*With my mind, or conscience, I serve the law of God : but with my flesh the law of sin. How to perform what is good I find not. I would be honest and loving, if I could be so without denying myself ; but I find a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me ?* For can any thing be stronger upon this head than the words of the inhuman princess, who being at the point of committing murder, cried out ; “*My mind, that is, my reason or con-*

science, leads me to one thing, but my new, impetuous passion, carries me to another against my will. I see, I approve what is right, but I do what is criminal.”*

ARG. IV. “The man whose experience is described in Rom. vii. is said to *delight in the law of God after the inward man*, and to *serve the law of God with the mind*; therefore he was partaker of apostolic holiness.”

ANS. Does he not also say, *With the flesh I serve the law of sin*? And did not *Medea* say as much in her way, before she imbrued her hands in innocent blood? What else could she mean when she cried out, “*I see and approve with my mind what is right, though I do what is criminal?*” Did not the Pharisees for a time rejoice in the burning and shining light of John the Baptist? And does not an evangelist inform us, that *Herod* himself heard that man of God [*ἡδύς*] with delight, and did many things too? Mark vi. 20. But is this a proof that either *Medea*, the *Pharisees*, or *Herod*, had attained apostolic holiness?

ARG. V. “The person who describes his unavailing struggles under the power of sin, cries out at last, *Who shall deliver me?* &c. and immediately expresses a hope of future deliverance; *thanking God* for it, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*. Rom. vii. 24, 25. Does not this show that the carnal man, sold under sin, was a Christian believer, and of consequence, Paul himself?”

ANS. This shows only that the man sold under sin, and groaning for evangelical liberty, ■ supported under his unhappy circumstances by a hope of deliverance; and that, when the law, like ■ severe schoolmaster, has almost brought him to Jesus Christ: when he is come to the borders of *Canaan*, and is not far from the kingdom of God, and the city of refuge, he begins to look and long earnestly for Christ, and has at times comfortable hopes of deliverance through him. He has a faith that desires liberty, but not a faith that obtains it. He has a degree of the *faith to be healed*, which is mentioned Acts xix. 9. but he has not yet the actually healing, prevailing faith which St. John calls the victory, and which is accompanied with an *internal witness* that *Christ is formed in our hearts*. It is absurd to confound the carnal man who struggles into Christ and liberty, saying, *Who shall deliver me*, &c. with the spiritual man, who is come to Christ, stands in his redeeming power, and witnesses that *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made him free from the law of sin and death*. The

* Sed trahit invitam nova vis, aliudque cupido,
Mens aliud suadet. Video meliora, proboque,
Deteriora sequor.

one may say in his hopeful moments, *I thank God, I shall have the victory through Jesus Christ*; but the other can say, *I have it now. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 57. The one wishes for, and the other enjoys liberty : the one has ineffectual desires, and the other has victorious habits. Such is the contrast between the carnal penitent described in Rom. vii. 14. and the obedient believer described in Rom. viii. "There is a great difference," says the Rev. Mr. *Whitefield*, "between good desires and good habits. Many have the one, who never attain the other." Many come up to the experience of a carnal penitent, who never attain the experience of an obedient believer. "Many have good desires to subdue sin : and yet, resting in these good desires, sin has always had the dominion over them;" *with the flesh they have always served the law of sin*. "A person sick of a fever may desire to be in health, but that desire is not health itself." *Whitefield's Works*, vol. iv. page 7. If the Calvinists would do justice to this important distinction, they would soon drop the argument which I answer, and the yoke of carnality which they try to fix upon St. Paul's neck.

ARG. VI. "You plead hard for the apostle's spirituality : but his own plain confession shows that he was really carnal and sold under sin. Does he not say to the Corinthians, that *there was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations which had been vouchsafed him* ? 2 Cor. xii. 7. Now what could this *thorn in the flesh* be, but a sinful lust ? And what this messenger of Satan, but pride or immoderate anger ? Thrice he besought the Lord that these plagues might depart from him, but God would not hear him. *Indwelling sin* was to keep him humble ; and if St. Paul stood in need of that remedy, how much more we ?"

Ans. 1. *Indwelling anger* keeps us angry, and not meek : *indwelling pride* keeps us proud, and not humble. The streams answer to the fountain. It is absurd to suppose that a salt spring will send forth fresh water.

2. You entirely mistake the apostle's meaning. While you try to make him a modest *imperfectionist*, you inadvertently represent him as an impudent *Antinomian* ; for, speaking of his *thorn in the flesh*, and of the *buffeting of Satan's messenger*, he calls them his *infirmities* : and says, *Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities*. Now if his *infirmities* were pride, a wrathful disposition, and a filthy lust ; did he not act the part of a filthy *Antinomian*, when he said that he gloried in them ? Would not even Paul's carnal man have blushed

to speak thus? Far from glorying in his pride, wrath, or indwelling lust, did he not groan, *O wretched man that I am?*

3. The apostle, still speaking of his *thorn in the flesh*, and of *Satan buffeting him by proxy*, and still calling these trials *his infirmities*, explains himself farther in these words: *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, &c. for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong. Christ's strength is made perfect in my weakness.* Those infirmities—that thorn in the flesh—that buffeting of Satan, cannot then be indwelling sin, or any outbreking of it; for the devil himself could do no more than to take pleasure in his wickedness: and in Rom. vii. the carnal penitent himself delights in the law of God after the inward man, instead of taking pleasure in his indwelling sin.

4. The *infirmities* in which St. Paul glories and takes pleasure, were such as had been given him to keep him humble after his revelations. *There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, &c.* 2 Cor. xii.

7. Those infirmities, and that thorn, were not then indwelling sin, for indwelling sin was not given him after his visions; seeing it stuck fast in him long before he went to *Damascus*. It is absurd therefore to suppose that God gave him the thorn of indwelling sin afterward, or indeed that he gave it him at all.

5. If Mr. Hill wants to know what we understand by St. Paul's *thorn in the flesh*, and by the messenger of Satan that buffeted him: we reply, that we understand his bodily infirmities—the great weakness, and the violent headach, with which *Tertullian* and *St. Chrysostom* inform us the apostle was afflicted. The same God who said to Satan concerning Job, *Behold, he is in thine hand to touch his bone and his flesh, but save his life*: the same God, who permitted that adversary to bind a daughter of Abraham with a spirit of bodily infirmity for eighteen years, the same gracious God, I say, permitted Satan to afflict St. Paul's body with uncommon pains; and at times, it seems, with preternatural weakness, which made his appearance and delivery contemptible in the eyes of his adversaries. That this is not a conjecture, grounded upon uncertain tradition, is evident from the apostle's own words two pages before. *His letters, say they, [that buffeted me in the name of Satan] are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible,* 2 Cor. x. 10. And soon after, describing these emissaries of the devil, he says, *Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, [to oppose me, and to prejudice you against my ministry:] and no marvel: for Satan himself [who sets them on] is transformed into an*

angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 13. But if the *thorn in the flesh* be all one with the *buffeting messenger of Satan*, St. Paul's meaning is evidently this: "God who suffered the Canaanites to be scourges in the sides of the Israelites, and thorns in their eyes, Josh. xxiii. 13. has suffered Satan to bruise my heel, while I bruise his head: and that adversary afflicts me thus, by his thorns and pricking briers, that is, by false apostles, who buffet me through malicious misrepresentations, which render me vile in your sight."—This sense is strongly countenanced by these words of Ezekiel, *They shall know that I am the Lord, and there shall be no more a pricking brier to the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them, Ezek. xxviii. 24.*

Both these senses agree with reason and godliness, with the text and the context. Satan immediately pierced the apostle's body with preternatural pain: and, by the malice of *false brethren*, the opposition of *false apostles* within the church, and the fierceness of cruel persecutors without, he immediately endeavoured to cast down or destroy the zealous apostle. But Paul walked in the perfect way, and we may well say of him, what was said of Job on a similar occasion, *In all this Paul sinned not*, as appears from his own words in this very epistle: *I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.—Our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side: without the church were fightings, within were fears: we had furious opposition from the heathens without: and within, we feared lest our brethren should be discouraged by the number and violence of our adversaries; Nevertheless God, who comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.—We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.—For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish through the thorns in our flesh, and the buffetings of Satan, yet the inward man is renewed day by day:—it grows stronger and stronger in the Lord.—When I see St. Paul bear up with such undaunted fortitude, under the bruising hand of Satan's messengers, and the pungent operation of the thorns in his flesh, methinks I see the general of the Christians waving the standard of Christian perfection, and crying, Be ye followers of me:—Be wholly spiritual.—Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand, and to witness with me, that in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.*

ARG. VII. "You extol the apostle too much. He certainly was a carnal man still: for St. Luke informs us, that the contention [*παροξ-*

συναγῆς] was so sharp between Barnabas and him, that they departed asunder one from the other. Acts xv. 39. Now charity [*ἡ ἀποξυσταῖς*] is not provoked, or does not contend. Strife or contention is one of the fruits of the flesh, and if St. Paul bore that fruit, I do not see why you should scruple to call him a carnal, wretched man, sold under sin."

ANS. 1. Every contention is not sinful. The apostle says himself, "Contend for the faith.—Be angry and sin not.—It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."—Jesus Christ did not break the law of love, when he looked round with anger upon the Pharisees; being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. Nor does Moses charge sin upon God, where he says, *The Lord rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation.* If St. Paul had contended in an uncharitable manner, I would directly grant that in that hour he fell from Christian perfection; for we assert, that as a carnal professor may occasionally cross *Jordan*, take a turn into the good land, and come back into the wilderness, as the spies did in the days of Joshua; so a spiritual man, who lives in *Canaan*, may occasionally draw back, and take a turn in the wilderness, especially before he is strengthened, established, and settled under his heavenly vine, in the good land that flows with spiritual milk and honey. But this was not the apostle's case. There is not the least intimation given of his sinning in the affair. *Barnabas*, says the historian, determined to take with them his own nephew, *John Mark*; but *Paul* thought not good to do it, because when they had tried him before, he went not with them to the work, but departed from them from *Pamphylia*, Acts xv. 38. Now, by every rule of reason and Scripture, *Paul* was in the right: for we are to try the spirits, and lovingly to beware of men, especially of such men as have already made us smart by their cowardly fickleness, as *John Mark* had done, when he had left the itinerant apostles in the midst of their dangers.

With respect to the word (*ἀποξυσταῖς*) contention or provoking, it is used in a good, as well as in a bad sense. Thus Heb. x. 24. we read of (*ἀποξυσταῖς ἀγαπῆς*) a contention, or a provoking unto love and good works. And therefore, granting that a grain of partiality to his nephew made *Barnabas* stretch too much that fine saying, *Charity hopeth all things*; yet from the circumstances of *Barnabas's* parting with St. *Paul*, we have not the least proof that St. *Paul* stained at all his Christian perfection in the affair.

If the reader will properly weigh these answers to the arguments, by which our opponents try to stain the character of St. *Paul* as a spiritual man, he will see, I hope, that the apostle is as much mis-

represented by Mr. Hill's doctrine, as Christian Perfection is by his fictitious creed.

SECTION IX.

St. Paul, instead of owning himself a carnal man, still sold under sin, presents us with a striking picture of the perfect Christian, by occasionally describing his own spirituality and heavenly mindedness. And therefore his genuine experiences are so many proofs, that Christian Perfection is attainable, and has actually been attained in this life.—What St. Augustine and the Rev. Mr. Whitefield once thought of Rom. vii.—And how near this last Divine, and the Rev. Mr. Romaine, sometimes come to the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

MR. HILL'S mistake, with respect to St. Paul's supposed carnality, is so much the more astonishing, as the apostle's professed spirituality not only clears him, but demonstrates the truth of our doctrine. Having therefore rescued his character from under the feet of those who tread his honour in the dust, and sell his person under sin at an Antinomian market, I shall retort the argument of our opponents; and appealing to St. Paul's genuine and undoubted experiences, when he taught wisdom among the perfect, I shall present the reader with a picture of the perfect Christian drawn at full length. Nor need I inform Mr. Hill, that the misrepresented apostle sits for his own picture before the glass of evangelical sincerity: and that turning spiritual self-painter, with the pencil of a good conscience, and with colours mixed by the Spirit of Truth, he draws this admirable portrait from the life.—

Be followers of me.—This one thing I do; leaving the things that are behind, I press towards the mark, for the prize of my heavenly calling [a crown of glory].—Charity is the bond of perfection.—Love is the fulfilling of the law.—If I have not charity, I am nothing. And what charity, or love, St. Paul had, appears from Christ's words and from his own.—Greater, [i. e. more perfect] love hath no man than this, says our Lord, that he lay down his life for his friends: now, this very love Paul had for Christ, for souls, yea, for the souls of his fiercest adversaries, the Jews. Hear him. The love of Christ constraineth us.—For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—I long to depart and to be with Christ.—I count not my life dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy.—I am ready not to be bound only, but to

die also for the name of the Lord Jesus.—If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. And in the next chapter but one to that, in which the apostle is supposed to profess himself actually sold under sin, he professes perfect love to his sworn enemies; even that love by which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk after the Spirit. Hear him. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not: my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I, &c. could wish that myself were accursed, i. e. made a curse (απο Χριστου) after the example of Christ, for my kinsmen according to the flesh; meaning his inexorable, bloody persecutors, the Jews.

Nor was this love of St. Paul like a land-flood: it constantly flowed like a river. This living water sprang up constantly in his soul: witness these words: Remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.—Of many I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they—mind earthly things: for our conversation is in heaven.—Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.—I know nothing [i. e. no evil] by, [or of] myself.—We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Whether we are beside, i. e. carried out beyond, ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, i. e. calm, it is for your cause: i. e. the love of God and man is the only source of all my tempers.—“Giving no offence in any thing, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, by pureness, by kindness, by love unfeigned;—being filled with comfort, and exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.—I will gladly spend and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved: [a rare instance this of the most perfect love!].—We speak before God in Christ, we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.—I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I [See here the destruction of sinful self!] but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.—As always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. We worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.—Mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an example. I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content: every where, and in all things I am instructed both to abound and to suffer need; I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.—Teaching every man in all wisdom, that I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto also I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

This description of the perfect Christian, and of St. Paul, is so exceedingly glorious ; and it appears to me such a refutation of the Calvinian mistake which I oppose, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure, and my readers the edification of seeing the misrepresented apostle give his own lovely picture a few more finishing strokes.—*We speak not as pleasing men, says he, but as pleasing God, who trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, &c., God is witness : nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others. —But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.—Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls ; —labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you.—The Lord make you abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you.—Thou hast fully known my manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience.—I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give in that day.*

When I read this wonderful experience of St. Paul, written by himself ; and see his doctrine of Christian perfection so gloriously exemplified in his own tempers and conduct ; I am surprised, that good men should still confound *Saul the Jew* with *Paul the Christian* ; and should take the son of the *earthly Jerusalem*, which is in bondage with her children, for the son of the *Jerusalem from above*, which is free, and is the mother of us all, who stand in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.—But, upon second thoughts, I wonder no more : for if those who engross to themselves the title of *Catholics*, can believe that Christ took his own body into his own fingers, broke it through the middle, when he took bread, broke it, and said, *This is my body which is broken for you* ; why cannot those, who monopolize the name of *orthodox* among us, believe also that St. Paul spoke without a figure when he said, *I am carnal, and sold under sin, and brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.—Brethren, I beseech you be as I am :—Those things which ye have heard and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you. Now you have heard and seen, that the evil which I would not, that I do ; and that with my flesh I serve the law of sin. In short, you have heard and seen that I am carnal and sold under sin.*

I am not at all surprised that carnal and injudicious professors should contend for this contradictory doctrine, this flesh-pleasing standard of Calvinian inconsistency, and Christian imperfection. But

that good, and in other respects *judicious* men, should so zealously contend for it, appears to me astonishing! They can never design to confound *carnal bondage* with *evangelical liberty*, and St. Paul's Christian experience with that of *Medea*, and "*Mr. Fulsome*," in order to countenance gross Antinomianism : nor can they take any pleasure in *misrepresenting* the holy apostle. Why do they then patronize so great a mistake? I answer still : By the same reason which makes pious Papists believe that consecrated bread is the real flesh of Christ. Their priests and the Pope say so : Some *figurative* expressions of our Lord seem to countenance their saying. We Protestants, whom the Papists call *carnal reasoners* and *heretics*, are of a different sentiment : and should they believe as we do, their humility and orthodoxy would be in danger. Apply this to the present case. Calvinian Divines and St. *Augustine* affirm, that St. Paul humbly spake his present experience when he said, *I am carnal, &c.* We who are called "Arminians and Perfectionists," think the contrary ; and our pious opponents suppose, that if they thought as we do, they should lose their humility and orthodoxy. Their error therefore springs chiefly from mistaken fears, and not from a wilful opposition to truth.

Nor is St. *Augustine* fully for our opponents : we have our part in the Bishop of *Hippo* as well as they. If he was for them, when his controversy with *Pelagius* had heated him ; he was for us when he yet stood upon the scriptural line of moderation. Then he fairly owned that the man, who the apostle personates in Rom. vii. is "*homo sub lege positus ante gratiam ; a man under the [condemning, irritating] power of the law, who is yet a stranger to the liberty and power of Christ's Gospel.*" Therefore, if Mr. Hill claim St. *Augustine* the prejudiced controvertist, we claim St. *Augustine* the unprejudiced Father of the Church ; or rather, setting aside his dubious authority, we continue our appeal to unprejudiced reason and plain Scripture.

What I say of St. *Augustine* may be said of the Rev. Mr. *Whitefield*. Before he had embraced St. *Augustine's* mistakes, which are known among us by the name of Calvinism, he believed, as well as that Father, that the disconsolate man who groans, *Who shall deliver me?* is not a *possessor*, but a seeker of Christian liberty. To prove it I need only transcribe the latter part of his sermon, entitled *The Marks of the New Birth*.

"Thirdly, [says he] I address myself to those who are under the drawings of the Father, and are going through the spirit of bondage : but not finding the marks [of the new birth] before-mentioned, are ever crying out [as the carnal penitent, Rom. vii.] *Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?* Despair not : for notwithstanding your

present trouble, it may be the divine pleasure to give you the kingdom." Hence it appears that Mr. Whitefield did not look upon such mourners as Christian believers; but only as persons who might become such if they earnestly sought. He therefore most judiciously exhorts them to seek till they find. "The grace of God through Jesus Christ," adds he, "is able to deliver you, and give you what you want: even you may receive the spirit of adoption, the promise of the Father. All things are possible with him; persevere, therefore, in seeking, and determine to find no rest in your spirit, till you know and feel, that you are thus born again from above, and God's Spirit witnesses with you spirits, that you are the children of God."

What immediately follows is a demonstration that, at that time, Mr. Whitefield was no enemy to Christian perfection, and thought that some had actually attained it; or else nothing would have been more trifling than his concluding address to perfect Christians. Take his own words, and remember that when he preached them, by the ardour of his zeal, and the devotedness of his heart, he showed himself a young man in Christ, able to trample under foot the most alluring baits of the flesh and of the world.

"Fourthly and lastly, [says he] I address myself to those, who have received the Holy Ghost in all its sanctifying graces, and are almost ripe for glory. Hail, happy saints! For your heaven is begun upon earth. You have already received the first fruits of the Spirit, and are patiently waiting till that blessed change come, when your harvest shall be complete. I see and admire you, though, alas! at so great a distance from you.* Your life I know, is hid with Christ in God. You have comforts, you have meat to eat, which a sinful, carnal world knows nothing of. Christ's yoke is become easy to you, and his burden light: you have passed through the pangs of the new birth, and now rejoice that Christ Jesus is formed in your hearts. You know what it is to dwell in Christ, and Christ in you. Like Jacob's ladder, although your bodies are on earth, yet your souls and hearts are in heaven; and by your faith and constant recollection, like the blessed angels, you do always behold the face of your Father, which

* At that time Mr. Whitefield was in Orders, and had received the spirit of adoption. As a proof of it I appeal, 1. To the account of his conversion at Oxford before he was ordained: and 2. To these his own words, "I can say to the honour of rich, free, distinguishing grace, that I received the spirit of adoption before I had conversed with one man, or read a single book on the doctrine of free justification by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ."—That is, before he had had any opportunity of being drawn from the simplicity of the Scripture Gospel into the Calvinian refinements. See his Works, Vol. IV. page 45.—Now, those Christians, who leave babes and young men in Christ "at so great a distance from them," are the very persons whom we call *Fathers in Christ, or perfect Christians*.

is in heaven. I need not then exhort you to press forward, &c. Rather I will exhort you in patience to possess your souls : yet a little while, and Jesus Christ will deliver you from the burden of the flesh, and an abundant entrance shall be administered unto you into the eternal joy, &c. of his heavenly kingdom." I have met with few descriptions of the *perfect Christian* that please me better. I make but one objection to it. Mr. *Whitefield* thought that the believers who "by constant recollection, like the blessed angels, always behold the face of their Father," are so advanced in grace, that they "need not be exhorted to press forward." This is carrying the doctrine of perfection higher than Mr. *Wesley* ever did. For my part, were I to preach to a congregation of such "happy saints," I would not scruple taking this text, *So run that ye may [eternally] obtain* : nor would I forget to set before them the example of the perfect apostle, who said, *This one thing I do, leaving the things that are behind, and reaching forth, I press towards the mark, &c.* Had I been in Mr. *Whitefield's* case, I own, I would either have refused to join the imperfectionists, or I would have recanted my address to perfect Christians.

So strong is the scriptural tide in favour of our doctrine, that it sometimes carried away the Rev. Mr. *Romaine* himself. Nor can I confirm the wavering reader in his belief of the possibility of obtaining the glorious liberty which we contend for, better than by transcribing a fine exhortation of that great Minister to what we call *Christian perfection*, and what he calls *The Walk of Faith*.

"The new covenant runs thus :—*I will put, says God, my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c.* The Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give a heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments, &c. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the Holy Spirit teaches brotherly love, he overcomes all opposition to it, &c. He writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, *on which hang all the law and the prophets.* The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, *is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost* ; and to the Thessalonians, *Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.* Thus he engages the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceases to be a yoke and a burden. How easy it is to do what one loves ! If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure it is to serve him ! What will not love put you upon doing or suffering to oblige him ! Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will run : yea, inspired by love it will mount

up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments. Happy are the people that are in such a case." Now, such a case is what we call, The state of Christian perfection ; to the obtaining of which Mr. Romaine excites his own soul by the following excellent exhortation.

" This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace which the Almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil, [if we mix faith with the promises as Mr. Romaine himself will soon intimate] and he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. O trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness, [that is, if I mistake not, make good your own covenant engagements.] He has promised to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might, &c. What is within thee, or without thee, to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a divine Friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God. [Query ; when the heart is kept full of indwelling sin, is it kept right with God ?] What cannot he do ?—What will he not do for thee ? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost ; the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them ; that he [not sin] dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the Holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus, in order to keep up and to promote that communion, entreat the Holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done on earth as it is in heaven." *Walk of Faith.* Vol. I. page 237, &c.

I do not produce this excellent quotation to insinuate that the Rev. Mr. Romaine is a perfectionist, but only to edify the reader, and to show that the good, mistaken men, who are most prejudiced against our doctrine, see it sometimes so true, and so excellent, that, forgetting their pleas for indwelling sin, they intimate that our daily petition may be answered ; and that the *will of our Father may be done on earth*

as it is in heaven ; an expression this, which includes the height and depth of all *Christian Perfection*.

SECTION X.

St. John is for Christian Perfection, and not for a Death Purgatory.

1 John i. 8, &c. is explained agreeably to St. John's Design, the Context, and the Vein of Holy Doctrine, which runs through the rest of the Epistle.

THE Scriptures declare that we are built upon the foundation of the apostles ; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone : and St. Paul being deservedly considered as the chief of the apostles, and of consequence, as the chief stone of the foundation, on which, next to the corner-stone, our holy religion is built ; who can wonder at the pains which our opponents take, to represent this important part of our foundation as carnal, wretched, and sold under sin ? Does not every body see, that such a foundation becomes the *Antinomian* structure which is raised upon it ; and is it not incumbent upon the opposers of Antinomianism to uncover that wretched foundation by removing the heaps of dirt in which St. Paul's spirituality is daily buried ; and by this mean to rescue the holy apostle, whom our adversaries endeavour to sell under sin as a carnal wretch ? — This rescue has been attempted in the four last sections. If I have succeeded in this charitable attempt, I may proceed to vindicate the holiness of St. John who is the last apostle that Mr. Hill calls to the help of *indwelling sin, Christian imperfection, and a death purgatory*.

Before I show how the loving apostle is pressed into a service, which is so contrary to his experience and to his doctrine of perfect love, I shall make a preliminary remark. To take a passage of Scripture out from the context, and to make it speak a language contrary to the obvious design of the sacred writer, is the way to butcher the body of scriptural divinity. This conduct injures truth, as much as the Galatians would have injured themselves, if they had literally pulled their eyes out, and given them to St. Paul : an edifying passage thus displaced may become as loathsome to a moral mind, as a good eye torn out of its bleeding orb in a good face, is odious to a tender heart.

Among the passages which have been thus treated, none has suffered more violence than this : *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive*

ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John i. 8.—“That’s enough for me,” says a hasty imperfectionist; “St. John clearly pleads for the *indwelling of sin* in us during the term of life, and he is so set against those who profess deliverance from sin, and Christian perfection in this life, that he does not scruple to represent them as *liars* and *self-deceivers*.”

Our opponents suppose that this argument is unanswerable. But to convince them that they are mistaken, we need only prove, that the sense which they so confidently give to the words of St. John is contrary, 1. To his design; 2. To the context; and 3. To the pure and strict doctrine which he enforces in the rest of the epistle.

I. With respect to St. John’s *design*, it evidently was to confirm believers, who were in danger of being deceived by *Antinomian* and *anti-Christian* seducers. When he wrote this epistle the church began to be corrupted by men, who, under pretence of *knowing* the mysteries of the Gospel better than the apostles, imposed upon the simple, Jewish fables, heathenish dreams, or vain, philosophic speculations; insinuating that their doctrinal peculiarities were the very marrow of the Gospel. Many such arose at the time of the Reformation, who introduced stoical dreams into Protestantism, and whom Bishop *Latimer* and others steadily opposed under the name of *Gospellers*.

The doctrines of all these *Gospellers* centred in making Christ, indirectly at least, the minister of sin: and in representing the preachers of *practical self-denying* Christianity, as persons unacquainted with Christian liberty. It does not indeed appear that the *Gnostics* or *Knowing Ones* [for so the ancient *Gospellers* were called] carried matters so far as openly to say, that believers might be God’s dear children in the very commission of adultery and murder, or while they worshipped *Milcom* and *Ashtaroth*; but it is certain that they could already reconcile the verbal denial of Christ, *fornication* and *idolatrous feasting*, with true faith; directly or indirectly *teaching and seducing* Christ’s servants to commit *fornication*, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Rev. ii. 20. At these Antinomians St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude levelled their epistles. St. Paul strongly cautioned Timothy, Titus, and the Ephesians against them. (See Eph. iv. 14—v. 6.) And St. John wrote his first epistle to warn the believers who had not yet been seduced into their error: a dreadful, though pleasing error this, which by degrees, led some to deny Christ’s law, and then his very name: hence the triumph of the spirit of *antichrist*. Now as these men insinuated that believers might be *righteous* without *doing righteousness*; and as they supposed that

Christ's righteousness, or our own knowledge and faith, would supply the want of internal sanctification and external obedience ; St. John maintains against them the necessity of that practical godliness, which consists in not committing sin, and in walking as Christ walked : nay, he asserts that Christ's blood, through the faith which is our victory, purifies from all sin, and cleanses from all unrighteousness. To make him therefore plead for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin, till we go into a death purgatory, is evidently to make him defeat his own design.

II. To be more convinced of it, we need only read the controverted text in connexion with the context ; illustrating both by some notes in brackets.—St. John opens his commission thus. 1st Epistle, chap. i. 5, 6, 7. *This is the message which we have received of him [Christ] and declare unto you, that God is light [bright, transcendent purity] and in him is no darkness [no impurity] at all. If we [believers] say, that we have fellowship with him [that we are united to him by an actually living faith] and walk in darkness [in impurity, or sin] we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, [if we live up to our Christian light and do righteousness,] we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. [—For, let no man deceive you ; he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he, Christ, is righteous ; and in him is no sin, 1 John iii. 5, 7.]* So far we see no plea, either for sin, or for the Calvinian purgatory.

Should Mr. Hill reply, that “ When St. John says, *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, the apostle does not mean *all indwelling sin* ; because this is a sin from which death alone can cleanse us : ” we demand a proof, and in the mean time we answer, that St. John, in the above-quoted passages, says, that *he who does righteousness, in the full sense of the word, is righteous, as Christ is righteous ; observing, that in him [Christ] is no sin.* So certain then, as there is *no indwelling sin* in Christ, there is *no indwelling sin* in a believer, *who does righteousness in the full sense of the word ; for he is made perfect in love, and is cleansed from all sin.*—Nor was St. John himself ashamed to profess this glorious liberty : for he said, *Our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment ; because as he [Christ] is [perfect in love, and of consequence without sin :] so are we in this world,* 1 John iv. 17. And the whole context shows, that the beloved apostle spake these great words of a likeness to Christ with respect to the *perfect love which fulfils the law, abolishes tormenting fear, and enables the believer to stand with boldness in the day of judgment, as being forgiven, and conformed to the image of God's Son.*

If Mr. Hill urge, that “The blood of Christ, powerfully applied by the Spirit, cleanses us indeed from the *guilt*, but not from the *filthiness* of sin : blood having a reference to justification and *pardon*, but not to sanctification and *holiness* :” we reply, that this argument is not only contrary to the preceding answer, but to the text, the context, and other plain scriptures.—1. To the text, where our being cleansed from all sin is evidently suspended on our humble and faithful walk : *If we walk in the light as he is in the light, the blood of Christ cleanses us, &c.* Now every novice in Gospel grace knows, that true Protestants do not suspend a sinner’s justification on his *walking in the light as God is in the light*.—2. It is contrary to the context : for in the next verse but one, where St. John evidently distinguishes *forgiveness* and *holiness*, he peculiarly applies the word *cleansing* to the latter of these blessings. *He is faithful to forgive us our sin* [by taking away our *guilt* :] *and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, [by taking away *all the filth* of indwelling sin.]—And 3. It is contrary to other places of Scripture, where Christ’s blood is represented as having a reference to *purification*, as well as to *forgiveness*. God himself says, “*Wash ye ; make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well.* The *washing* and *cleansing* here spoken of, have undoubtedly a reference to the removal of the *filth*, as well as of the *guilt* of sin. Accordingly we read, that all those who *stand before the throne* have both *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. That is, they are justified by, and sanctified with, his blood. Hence our Church prays, “*that we may so eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed* [i. e. made clean also] *through his most precious blood.*” To rob Christ’s blood of its sanctifying power, and to confine its efficacy to the atonement, is therefore an Antinomian mistake, by which our opponents greatly injure the Saviour, whom they pretend to exalt.

Should Mr. Hill assert, that “When St. John says, *If we walk in the light, &c. the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin*, the loving apostle’s meaning is not, that the blood of Christ *radically* cleanses us, but only that it *begets* and *carries* on a cleansing from all sin, which cleansing will be completed in a death purgatory :” we answer : 1. This assertion leaves Mr. Hill’s doctrine open to all the above-mentioned difficulties.—2. It overthrows the doctrine of the Protestants, who have always maintained that nothing is absolutely necessary to eternal salvation, and of consequence to our *perfect cleansing*, but an obedient, steadfast faith, apprehending the full virtue of Christ’s purifying blood, according to Acts xv. 9. *God giving them the Holy*

Ghost, put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith:—not by death.—3. It is contrary to matter of fact: Enoch and Elijah, having been translated to heaven, and therefore having been perfectly purified, even in body, without going into the Calvinian purgatory.—But 4. What displeases us most in the evasive argument which I answer is, that it puts the greatest contempt on Christ's blood, and puts the greatest cheat on weak believers, who sincerely wait to be now made perfect in love, that they may worthily magnify God's holy name.

An illustration will prove it. I suppose that *Christ* is now in England, doing as many wonderful cures as he formerly did in Judea. My benevolent opponent runs to the *Salop Infirmary*, and tells all the patients there that the great Physician, the Son of God, has once more visited the earth; and he again *heals all manner of sickness and diseases among the people, and cleanses from the most inveterate leprosy by a touch or a word.* All the patients believe Mr. Hill; some hop to this wonderful Saviour, and others are carried to his footstool. They touch and retouch him: he strokes them round again and again: but not one of them is cured. The wounds of some, indeed, are skinned over for a time; but it soon appears that they still fester at the bottom, and that a painful core remains unextracted in every sore. The poor creatures complain to Mr. Hill, "Did you not, Sir, assure us upon your honour, as a Christian gentleman, that Christ *heals all manner of diseases, and cleanses from all kinds of leprosies?*"—True, says Mr. Hill; but you must know, that these words do not mean that he *radically cures* any disease, or *cleanses from any leprosy*; they only signify that he *begins* to cure every disease, and *continues* to cleanse from *all* leprosies; but notwithstanding all his cures, *begun and continued*, nobody is cured before death. So, my friends, you must bear your festering sores as well as you can, till death comes *radically* to cleanse and cure you from them all. Instead of crying "Sweet grace!—rich grace!" and of clapping Mr. Hill for his evangelical message, the disappointed patients desire him to take them back to the Infirmary, saying, we have there a chance for a cure before death: but your great Physician pronounces us incurable, unless death comes to the help of his art; and we think that any surgeon could do as much, if he did not do more. [See Sect. XII. ARG. 20.]

If Mr. Hill say that I beat the air, and that the text which he quotes in his "Creed for Perfectionists," to show that it is impossible to be cleansed from all sin before death, is not 1 John i. 7. but the next verse; I reply, that if St. John assert in the 7th verse, that

Christ's blood, powerfully applied by the spirit of faith, *cleanses us from all sin*, that inspired writer cannot be so exceedingly inconsistent as to contradict himself in the very next verse.

Should the reader ask, "What then can be St. John's meaning in that verse, where he declares, that *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?* How can these words possibly agree with the doctrine of a perfect cleansing from all sin?"

We answer, that St. John having given his first stroke to the *Antinomian* believers of this day, strikes by the bye a blow at *Pharisaic* professors. There were in St. John's time, as there are in our own, numbers of men who had never been properly convinced of sin, and who boasted, as Paul once did, that *touching the righteousness of the law, they were blameless*: they served God—they did their duty—they gave alms—they never did any body any harm—they thanked God that they were not as other men; but especially that they were not like those mourners in Sion, who were no doubt very wicked, since they made so much ado about God's mercy, and a powerful application of the Redeemer's all cleansing blood. How proper then was it for St. John to inform his readers, that these *whole-hearted* Christians, these *perfect* Pharisees, were no better than *liars* and *self-deceivers*; and that true Christian righteousness is always attended by a genuine conviction of our *native* depravity, and by an humble acknowledgment of our *actual* transgressions.

This being premised; it appears that the text so dear to us, and so mistaken by our opponents, has this fair, scriptural meaning: "*If we* [followers of him who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance] *say we have no sin* [no *native* depravity from our first parents, and no *actual* sin, at least no such sin as deserves God's wrath; fancying we need not secure a particular application of Christ's atoning and purifying blood] *we deceive ourselves, and the truth* [of repentance and faith] *is not in us.*"

That these words are levelled at the monstrous error of self-conceited and self-perfected Pharisees, and not at the *glorious liberty of the children of God*, appears to us indubitable from the following reasons:—1. The immediately preceding verse strongly asserts this liberty.—2. The verse immediately following secures it also, and cuts down the doctrine of our opponents; the apostle's meaning being evidently this;—"Though I write to you, that *if we say*, we are originally free from sin, and never did any harm, *we deceive ourselves*; yet, mistake me not; I do not mean that we need continue under the guilt, or in the moral infection of any sin, original or actual: for if we penitently and believingly confess both, *he is faithful and just to*

forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, whether it be native or self-contracted, internal or external. Therefore if we have attained the glorious liberty of God's children, we need not, through voluntary humility, say that we do nothing but sin. It will be sufficient, when we are cleansed from all unrighteousness, still to be deeply humbled for our present infirmities, and for our past sins; confessing both with godly sorrow and filial shame. For if we should say, we have not sinned," [note, St. John does not write, If we should say, we do not sin,] "we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us; common sense dictating, that if we have not sinned, we speak an untruth, when we profess that Christ has forgiven our sins." This appears to us the true meaning of 1 John i. 8. when it is fairly considered in the light of the context.

III. We humbly hope, that Mr. Hill himself will be of our sentiment, if he compare the verse in debate, with the pure and strict doctrine which St. John enforces throughout his epistle. In the second chapter he says, *We know that we know him, if we keep his commandments, &c. Whoso KEEPETH HIS WORD, in him verily is the love of God PERFECTED. He that abideth in him ought HIMSELF ALSO SO TO WALK, EVEN AS HE WALKED, &c. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, [where the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin] and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

The same doctrine runs also through the next chapter. *Every one that hath this hope in him, PURIFIETH HIMSELF AS HE [Christ] IS PURE. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, &c. and ye know, that he was manifested to take away our sins, [i. e. to destroy them root and branch:] and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him SINNETH NOT: whosoever sinneth, does not [properly] see him, neither know him: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he [Christ] is righteous. He that committeth sin, [i. e. as appears by the context, he that transgresseth the law,] is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning: for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God [Whosoever is made a partaker of God's holiness, according to the perfection of the Christian dispensation] doth not commit sin, i. e. does not transgress the law; for his seed, the ingrafted word, made quick and powerful by the indwelling Spirit, remaineth in him, and [morally speaking] he cannot sin, because he is [thus] born of God.—For if ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him, and he that doth not righteousness,—he that committeth sin, or transgresseth the law, is so far of the devil, for the devil transgresseth the laws, i. e. sinneth from the beginning.—In this the children*

of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.* Whosoever does not righteousness, i. e. whosoever sinneth, taking the word in its evangelical meaning, is not of God, 1 John iii. 3—11. ii. 29.

If Mr. Hill cry out "*Shocking!* Who are those men that do not sin?" I reply, All those whom St. John speaks of a few verses below, *Beloved, if our heart condemn us; [and it will condemn us if we sin, but God much more, for God is greater than our hearts, &c.] Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God, &c. because WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND DO THOSE THINGS THAT ARE PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, 1 John iii. 20, &c.*—Now we apprehend all the sophistry in the world will never prove that, evangelically speaking, *keeping God's commandments, and doing what pleases him, is sinning.* Therefore, when St. John professed to *keep God's commandments, and to do what is pleasing in his sight*, he professed what our opponents call *sinless perfection*, and what we call *Christian perfection*.

Mr. Hill is so very unhappy in his choice of St. John, to close the number of his apostolic witnesses for Christian imperfection, that were it not for a few clauses of his first epistle, the anti-solidifidian severity of that apostle might drive all *imperfect* Christians to despair. And what is most remarkable, those few encouraging clauses are all conditional; *If any man sin*, for there is no necessity that he should; or rather, [according to the most literal sense of the word *αμαρτη*, which being in the aorist, has generally the force of a past tense] *If any man HAVE SINNED*:—*If he have not sinned unto death: if we confess our sins:—if that which ye have heard shall remain in you: if ye walk in the light:—then do we evangelically enjoy the benefit of our Advocate's intercession.* Add to this, that the first of those clauses is prefaced by these words, *My little children, these things I write unto you, THAT YE SIN NOT*; and all together are guarded by these dreadful declarations: *He that says, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.—If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.—If any man say I love God—and loveth not his brother, [note, he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law] he is a liar. There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it. Let no man deceive you, he that does righteousness is righteous.—He that committeth sin [or transgresseth the law] is of the devil.* To represent St. John, therefore, as an enemy to the doctrine of *Christian perfection*, does

* This doctrine of St. John is perfectly agreeable to that of our Lord, who said that *Judas had a devil*, because he gave place to the love of money; and who called *Peter himself Satan*, when he savoured the things of men, in opposition to the things of God.

not appear to us less absurd, than to represent *Satan* as a friend to complete holiness.

SECTION XI.

Why the Privileges of Believers under the Gospel of Christ, cannot be justly measured by the experience of Believers under the law of Moses. A Review of the Passages, upon which the enemies of Christian Perfection found their hopes, that Solomon, Isaiah, and Job, were strong Imperfectionists.

IF Mr. Hill had quoted Solomon, instead of St. John; and Jewish, instead of Christian saints; he might have attacked the glorious Christian liberty of God's children with more success: for *the heir, as he is a child* [in Jewish non-age] *differeth nothing from a servant: but is under tutors* [and schoolmasters] *until the time appointed by the Father.* Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage:—but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, —and stand in the [peculiar] liberty wherewith Christ has made us [Christians] free, Gal. iii. 1.—iv. 1. But this very passage, which shows that Jews are, comparatively speaking, in bondage, shows also that the Christian dispensation, and its high privileges cannot be measured by the inferior privileges of the Jewish dispensation, under which Solomon lived: for *the law made nothing perfect* in the Christian sense of the word; and *what the law could not do, God sending his only Son condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us* [Christian believers] *who walk after the Spirit*: being endued with that large measure of it, which began to be poured out on believers on the day of pentecost; for that measure of the Spirit was not given before, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John vii. 39. But after he had ascended on high, and had obtained the gift of the indwelling Comforter for believers, they received, says St. Peter, the end of their faith, even the Christian salvation of their souls; a salvation this, which St. Paul justly calls so great salvation, when he compares it with Jewish privileges, Heb. ii. 3. Of which [Christian] salvation, proceeds St. Peter, the prophets have inquired, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you [Christians] searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them [according to their dispensa-

tion] did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory [the glorious dispensation] that should follow [his return to heaven, and accompany the outpouring of the Spirit.] Unto whom [the Jewish prophets] it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us [Christians] they did minister the things which are now preached unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. 1 Pet. i. 9, &c. And, among those things, the Scriptures reckon the coming of the spiritual kingdom of Christ with power into the hearts of believers, and the baptism of fire, or the perfect love, which burns up the chaff of sin, thoroughly purges God's floor, and makes the hearts of perfect believers a habitation of God through the Spirit, and not a nest for indwelling sin.

As this doctrine may appear new to Mr. Hill, I beg leave to confirm it by the testimony of two as eminent Divines as England has lately produced. The one is Mr. Baxter, who, in his comment upon these words, *A testament is of force after men are dead*, &c. Heb. ix. 17. very justly observes, that "His [Christ's] covenant has the nature of a testament, which supposeth the death of the testator, and is not of efficacy till then, to give full right of what he bequeathed. Note, that the eminent, evangelical kingdom of the Mediator, in its last, full edition, called *the kingdom of Christ*, and *of heaven*, distinct from the obscure state of promise before Christ's incarnation began at Christ's resurrection, ascension, and sending of the eminent gift of the Holy Ghost, and was but as an embryo before."—My other witness is the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, who proposes and answers the following question: "Why was not the Holy Ghost given till Jesus Christ was glorified?—Because till then he was himself on the earth, and had not taken on him the kingly office, nor pleaded the merits of his death before his heavenly Father, by which he purchased that invaluable blessing for us."—See his Works, Vol. IV. p. 362. Hence I conclude, that, as the full measure of the Spirit which perfects Christian believers, was not given before our Lord's ascension, it is as absurd to judge of Christian perfection by the experiences of those who died before that remarkable event, as to measure the powers of a sucking child by those of an embryo.

This might suffice to unnerve all the arguments which our opponents produce from the Old Testament against Christian perfection. However, we are willing to consider a moment those passages by which they plead for the necessary indwelling of sin in all Christian believers, and defend the walls of the *Jericho* within, that accursed city of refuge for spiritual *Canaanites* and *Diabolonians*.

I. 1 Kings viii. 46, &c. *Solomon* prays and says, *If they [the Jews] sin against thee, (for there is no man* that sinneth not) and thou be angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive,—yet, if they bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication unto thee, and return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul—then hear thou their prayer.* No unprejudiced person, who in reading this passage takes the parenthesis (“for there is no man that sinneth not”) in the connexion with the context, can, I think, help seeing that the Rev. Mr. *Toplady*, who, if I remember right, quotes this text against us, mistakes *Solomon*, as much as Mr. *Hill* does *St. John*. The meaning is evidently, there is no man who is not liable to sin; and that a man actually sins, when he actually departs from God. Now *peccability*, or a *liableness to sin*, is not *indwelling sin*; for angels, Adam, and Eve, were all *liable to sin* in their *sinless* state. And that there are some men who do not actually sin, is indubitable: 1. From the hypothetical phrase in the context, *if any man sin*, which shows that their sinning is not unavoidable:—2. From God’s anger against those that sin, which is immediately mentioned. Hence it appears, that so certain as God is not angry with all his people, some of them do not sin in the sense of the wise man:—and 3. from *Solomon*’s intimating, that these very men who have sinned, or have actually departed from God, may *bethink themselves, repent, and turn to God with all their heart, and with all their soul*, that is, may attain the perfection of their dispensation; the two poles not being more opposed to each other than *sinning* is to *repenting*; and *departing from God* to *returning to him with all our heart and with all our soul*. Take therefore the whole passage together, and you have a demonstration that *where sin hath abounded, there grace may much more abound*. And what is this, but a demonstration that our doctrine is not chimerical? For if *Jews*, [*Solomon* himself being judge] instead of *sinning* and *departing from God*, can *repent, and turn to him with all their heart*; how much more *Christians*, whose privileges are so much greater!

II. “But *Solomon* says also, *There is not a just man upon earth, that does good and sinneth not.* Eccles. vii. 20.”

1. We are not sure that *Solomon* says it; for he may introduce here the very same man who, four verses before, says, *Be not righte-*

* If Mr. *Hill* consult the Original, he will find that the word translated *sinneth*, is in the future tense, which is often used for an *indefinite* tense in the *potential* mood, because the Hebrews have no such mood or tense.—Therefore our translators would only have done justice to the *original*, as well as to the context, if they had rendered the whole clause, *There is no man that may not sin*; instead of *There is no man that sinneth not*.

ous overmuch, &c. and Mr. *Toplady* may mistake the interlocutor's meaning in one text, as Dr. *Trap* has done in the other.—But 2. Supposing *Solomon* speaks, may not he in general assert, what St. *Paul* does, Rom. iii. 23. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, the just not excepted? Is not this the very sense which *Canne*, Calvinist as he was, gives to the wise man's words, when he refers the reader to this assertion of the apostle? And did we ever speak against this true doctrine?—3. If you take the original word *to sin*, in the lowest sense which it bears:—If it mean in Eccles. vii. 20. what it does in Judg. xx. 16. namely, *to miss a mark*, we shall not differ; for we maintain that, according to the standard of paradisiacal perfection, *There is not a just man upon earth, that does good, and misses not the mark of that perfection*, i. e. that does not lessen the good he does, by some involuntary, and therefore (evangelically speaking) *sinless defect*.—4. It is bold to pretend to overthrow the glorious liberty of God's children, which is asserted in a hundred plain passages of the New Testament, by producing so vague a text as Eccl. vii. 20. And to measure the spiritual attainments of all believers, in all ages, by this obscure standard, appears to us as ridiculous as to affirm that of a *thousand* believing men, 999 are indubitably villains; and that out of a *thousand* Christian women, there is not one but is a strumpet; because *Solomon* says a few lines below, *One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found*, Eccles. vii. 28.

III. If it be objected, that “*Solomon* asks, *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* Prov. xx. 9:” We answer:

1. Does not *Solomon's* father ask, *Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* Does a question of that nature always imply an absurdity or an impossibility? Might not *Solomon's* query be evangelically answered thus? “The man in whom thy father *David's* prayer is answered, *Create in me a clean heart, O God*:—The man who has regarded St. *James's* direction to the primitive Solifidians, *Cleanse your hearts, ye double-minded*:—The man who has obeyed God's awful command, *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from iniquity, that thou mayest be saved*.—Or the man who is interested in the sixth beatitude, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*:—That man, I say, can testify to the honour of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, that he has made his heart clean.”

2. However, if *Solomon*, as is most probable, reproves in this passage the conceit of a perfect, boasting Pharisee, the answer is obvious: no man of that stamp can say with any truth, *I have made my*

heart clean; for the law of faith excludes all proud boasting, and if we say, with the temper of the Pharisee, *that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*; for we have pride, and Pharisaic pride too, which, in the sight of God, is perhaps the greatest of all sins.—If our opponents take the wise man's question in either of the preceding scriptural senses, they will find that it perfectly agrees with the doctrine of Jewish and Christian perfection.

IV. *Solomon's* pretended testimony against Christian perfection is frequently backed by two of *Isaiah's* sayings, considered apart from the context, one of which respects the *filthiness* of our *righteousness*; and the other, the *uncleanness* of our *lips*. I have already proved [Vol. I. Check IV. Let. viii.] that the righteousness which *Isaiah* compares to *filthy rags*, and *St. Paul* to *dung*, is only the anti-evangelical, Pharisaic righteousness of unhumiliated professors; a righteousness this, which may be called the righteousness of impenitent pride, rather than the righteousness of humble faith; therefore the excellence of the righteousness of faith, cannot, with any propriety, be struck at by that passage.

V. “But *Isaiah*, undoubtedly speaking of himself, says, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.*” *Isaiah* vi. 5.

True: but give yourself the trouble to read the two following verses, and you will hear him declare that the power of God's Spirit applying the blood of sprinkling, (which power was represented by a live coal taken from off the altar) touched his lips; so that his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged. This passage, therefore, when it is considered with the context, instead of disproving the doctrine of Christian perfection, strongly proves the doctrine of Jewish perfection.

If *Isaiah* is discharged from the service into which he is so unwarrantably pressed, our opponents will bring *Job*, whom the Lord himself pronounces *perfect*—according to his dispensation; notwithstanding the hard thoughts which his friends entertained of him.

VI. *Perfect Job* is absurdly set upon demolishing Christian perfection, because he says, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; If I say* (in a self-justifying spirit) *I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse*, *Job* ix. 20.—But 1. What does *Job* assert here, more than *Solomon* does in the word to which *Canne* on this text judiciously refers his readers, *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger and not thine own lips*. Though even this rule is not without exception; witness the circumstance which drove *St. Paul* to what he calls a *confidence of boasting*.—2. That professing the perfection of our dispensation in a self-abasing and

Christ-exalting spirit, is not a proof of perverseness, is evident from the profession which humble *Paul* made of his being one of the perfect Christians of his time, Phil. iii. 15. and from St. *John's* declaration, that his *love was made perfect*, John iv. 17. For when we have the *witnessing Spirit*, whereby we know the things which are freely given to us of God, we may, nay, at proper times, we should, acknowledge his gifts, to his glory, though not to our own.—3. If God himself had pronounced *Job perfect*, according to his dispensation, *Job's* modest fear of pronouncing himself so, does not at all overthrow the divine testimony; such a timorousness only shows, that the more we are advanced in grace, the more we are averse to whatever has the appearance of ostentation: and the more deeply we feel what *Job* felt, when he said, *Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will put my hand upon my mouth*, Job xl. 4.

VII. “But *Job* himself, far from mentioning his perfection, says, *Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlii. 6.”—And does this disprove our doctrine? Do we not assert that our perfection admits of a continual growth: and that *perfect repentance* and *perfect humility*, are essential parts of it? These words of *Job*, therefore, far from overthrowing our doctrine, prove that the patient man's *perfection* grew; and that from the top of the perfection of Gentilism, he saw the day of Christian perfection, and had a taste of what Mr. *Wesley* prays for, when he sings,

O let me gain *perfection's* height,
O let me into nothing fall, &c.

Confound, o'erpower me with thy grace;
I would be by myself abhorr'd;
All might, all majesty, all praise,
All glory be to Christ my Lord!

VIII. With respect to the words, *The stars are not pure—the heavens are not clean in his sight*:—his angels he charged with folly, Job xv. 15.—iv. 18. we must consider them as a proof that absolute perfection belongs to God alone; a truth this, which we inculcate as well as our opponents. Besides, if such passages overthrow the doctrine of *perfection*, they would principally overthrow the doctrine of *angelical* perfection, which Mr. *Hill* holds as well as we. To conclude:

IX. When *Job* asks, *What is man, that he should be clean? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?—Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* And when he answers, *Not one*; he means not one who falls short of infinite power. If he excluded *Emmanuel* God

with us, I would directly point at him who said, I will, be thou clean; and at the believers who declare, We can do all things through Christ that strengthened us, and accordingly cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, that they may be found of him without spot and blameless. Yea, I would point at the poor leper, who has faith enough to say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. They tell me that my leprosy must cleave to me till death batter down this tenement of clay; but faith speaks a different language: only say the word. Be thou clean, and I shall be cleansed:—Purge me with hyssop, Sprinkle clean water upon me, and I shall be clean from all my filthiness."

If these remarks be just, does it not appear, that it is as absurd to stab Christian perfection through the sides of *Job, Isaiah, and Solomon*, as to set *Peter, Paul, James, and John*, upon "cutting it up root and branch?"

SECTION XII.

Containing a variety of Arguments, to prove the Absurdity of the twin Doctrines of Christian Imperfection and a Death Purgatory.

I HAVE hitherto stood chiefly upon the defensive, by showing that *Mr. Hill* has no ground for insinuating that our church, and *Peter, Paul, James, and John*, are defenders of the twin doctrines of *Christian imperfection* and a *death purgatory*. I shall now attack these doctrines by a variety of arguments, which, I hope, will recommend themselves to the candid reader's conscience and reason.

If I wanted to encounter *Mr. Hill* with a broken reed, and not with the weapons of a Protestant, Reason and Scripture, I would retort here the grand argument by which he attempts to cut down our doctrines of *free agency*, and *cordial obedience*: "The generality of the carnal Clergy are for you, therefore your doctrines are false:" If this argument be good, is not that which follows better still? "The generality of *bad men* are for your doctrine of *Christian imperfection*: therefore that doctrine is *false*; for if it were true, wicked people would not so readily embrace it." But as I see no solidity in that argument by which I could disprove the very Being of a God (for the generality of wicked men believe there is a supreme Being) I discard it, and begin with one which I hope is not unworthy the reader's attention.

I. Does not *St. Paul* insinuate that no soul goes to heaven without perfection, where he calls the blessed souls that wait for a happy

resurrection, *πνευματα δικαιων τετελειωμενων*, the spirits of just men made perfect, and not *τετελειωμενα πνευματα δικαιων*, the perfected spirits of just men? Heb. xii. 23. Does not this mode of expression denote a perfection which they attained while they were men, and before they commenced *separate spirits*; that is, before death? Can any one go to a holy and just God, without first being made just and holy? Does not the apostle say, that the *unrighteous*, or unjust, shall not inherit the kingdom of God? and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord? Must not this holiness, of whatsoever degree it is, be free from every mixture of unrighteousness? If a man have at death the least degree of any *unrighteousness* and *defiling* mixture in his soul, must he not go to some purgatory, or to hell? Can he go to heaven, if *nothing that defileth shall enter the New Jerusalem*? And if at death his righteous disposition is free from every unrighteous, immoral mixture, is he not a just man perfected on earth, according to the dispensation he is under?

II. If Christ takes away the *outward* pollution of believers, while he absolutely leaves their hearts full of indwelling sin in this life: why did he find fault with the Pharisees for cleansing the *outside of the cup and platter*, whilst they left the *inside full of all corruption*? If God says, *My son, give me thy heart*; if he requires truth in the *inward parts*, and complains that the *Jews drew near to him with their lips*, when their hearts were far from him; is it not strange he should be willing that the hearts of his most peculiar people, the hearts of Christians, should necessarily remain *unclean* during the term of life?—Besides, Is there any other Gospel way of *fully* cleansing the *lips and hands*, but by *thoroughly* cleansing the *heart*? And is not a cleansing so far *Pharisaical* as it is, *heartless*? Once more: if Christ has assured us, that *Blessed are the pure in heart*, and that *If the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed*, does it not behove our opponents to prove, that a believer has a *pure heart*, who is full of indwelling corruption; and that a man is *free indeed*, who is *still sold under inbred sin*?

III. When our Lord has bound the indwelling man of sin, the strong man armed, can he not cast him out?—When he cast out devils, and *unclean spirits* with a word, did he call *Death* to his assistance? Did he not radically perform the wonderful cure, to show his readiness and ability radically to cure those whose hearts are possessed by indwelling iniquity, that cursed sin whose name is *Legion*?—When the legion of expelled fiends entered into the swine, the poor brutes were delivered from their infernal guests, by being choked in the sea. *Death* therefore cured them, not Christ. And can we have no cure but that of the swine? No deliverance from indwelling sin, but in the

arms of death?—If this is the case, go drown your plaguing corruptions in the first pond which you meet with, O ye poor mourners, who are more weary of life, because of indwelling sin, than Rebecca was because of the daughters of Heth.

IV. How does the notion, of sin necessarily dwelling in the hearts of the most advanced Christians, agree with the full tenor of the new covenant, which runs thus, *I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts.*—*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make them free from the law of sin and death?* If the law of perfect love to God and man be fully put in the heart of a believer, according to the full tenor of Christ's Gospel, what room remains for the hellish statutes of Satan? Does not the Lord cleanse the believer's heart, as he writes the law of love there? And when that law is wholly written by the Spirit, *the finger of God*, which applies the *all-cleansing blood*, is not the heart wholly cleansed? when God completely gives the heart of flesh, does he not completely take away the heart of stone? Is not the heart of stone the very rock, in which the serpent, *indwelling sin*, lurks? And will God take away that cursed rock, and spare the venomous viper that breeds in its clefts?

V. Cannot the little leaven of sincerity and truth leaven the whole heart? But can this be done without purging out entirely the old leaven of malice and wickedness? May not a father in Christ be as free from sin, as one who is totally given up to a reprobate mind, is free from righteousness?—Is not the glorious liberty of God's children, the very reverse of the total and constant slavery to sin, in which the strongest sons of Belial live and die?—If a full admittance of Satan's temptation could radically destroy original righteousness in the hearts of our first parents; why cannot a full admittance of Christ's Gospel radically destroy original unrighteousness in the hearts of believers?—Does not the Gospel promise us, that *where sin has abounded, grace shall much more abound?* And did not sin so abound once, as entirely to sweep away inward holiness before death? But how does grace abound much more than sin, if it never can entirely sweep away inward sin without the help of death?

VI. Is there not a present, cleansing power, as well as a present, atoning efficacy, in the Redeemer's blood? Have we not already taken notice, that the same passage of Scripture which informs us, that *if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins*, declares also that upon the same gracious terms, *he is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?* Now, if the faithful and just God is ready to forgive to-day a poor mourner who sincerely confesses his guilt: and if it would be doing divine faithfulness and justice great

dishonour, to say that God will not forgive a weeping penitent before death; is it doing those divine perfections honour to assert, that God *will not cleanse* before death a believer who humbly confesses and deeply laments the remains of sin? Why should not God display his faithfulness and justice in *cleansing us now* from inbred sin, as well as *forgiving us now* our actual iniquities? if we *now* comply with the gracious terms, to the performance of which this double blessing is annexed in the Gospel charter?

VII. If our opponents allow that faith and love may be made perfect two or three minutes before death, they give up the point. Death is no longer absolutely necessary to the destruction of unbelief and sin: for if the *evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God* may be taken away, and the completely *honest and good heart* given two or three minutes before death, we desire to know why this change may not take place two or three hours—two or three weeks—two or three years—before that awful moment?

VIII. It is, I think, allowed on all sides, that *we are saved*, that is, sanctified as well as justified, *by faith*?—Now that particular height of sanctification, that full *circumcision of the heart*, which centrally purifies the soul, springs from a peculiar degree of saving faith, and from a particular operation of the *Spirit of burning*:—a quick operation this, which is compared to a *baptism of fire*, and proves sometimes so sharp and searching, that it is as much as a healthy, strong man can do to bear up under it. It seems therefore absurd to suppose, that God's infinite wisdom has tied this powerful operation to the article of death, that is, to a time when people, through delirium or excessive weakness, are frequently unable to think, or to bear the feeble operation of a little wine and water.

IX. When our Lord says, *Make the tree good and its fruit good*;—a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things—does he suppose that the hearts of his faithful people must always remain fraught with indwelling sin? Is indwelling sin a *good treasure*? Or does Christ any where plead for the necessary indwelling of a *bad treasure* in a good man? When the spouse is all glorious within; when her eye is single, and her whole body is full of light—how can she be still full of darkness, an inbred iniquity? And when St. Paul observes, that established Christians are *full of goodness*, Rom. xv. 14. who can think he means that they are *full of heart corruption*, and (what is worse still) that they must continue so to their dying day?

X. If *Christian Perfection* be nothing but the *depth* of evangelical repentance, the *full* assurance of faith, and the *pure* love of God and man shed abroad in a faithful believer's heart by the Holy Ghost

given unto him, to cleanse him, and to keep him clean *from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit*, and to enable him to *fulfil the law of Christ*, according to the talents he is entrusted with, and the circumstances in which he is placed in this world :—If this, I say, is *Christian perfection*, nothing can be more absurd than to put off the attaining of it till we die and go to heaven. This is evident from the descriptions of it which we find in the New Testament. The first is in our Lord's account of the beatitudes. For how can holy *mourning* be perfected in heaven, where there will be nothing but *perfect joy*?—Will not the loving disposition of *peace-makers* ripen too late for the church, if it ripen only *in heaven*, where there will be no *peace-breakers*; or in the article of death, when people lose their senses, and are utterly disabled from acting a reconciler's part?—Ye that are *persecuted for righteousness sake*, will ye stay till ye are among the blessed, to *rejoice in tribulation*? Will the blessed *revile you*, and say *all manner of evil of you falsely*, to give you an opportunity of being exceeding glad, when you are counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name?—And ye, double-minded Christians, will ye tarry for the blessedness of the *pure in heart* till ye come to heaven?—Have you forgot that heaven is *no purgatory*? but a glorious reward for those who are *pure in heart*? for those who have *purified themselves*, even as God is pure?

XI. From the *beatitudes* our Lord passes to *precepts* descriptive of Christian perfection reduced to practice.—*If thy brother hath ought against thee, go thy way, and be reconciled to him.*—*Agree quickly with thine adversary.*—*Resist not evil.*—*Turn thy left cheek to him that smites thee on the right.*—*Give alms so as not to let thy left hand know what thy right hand does.*—*Fast evangelically.*—*Lay not up treasures upon earth.*—*Take no [anxious] thought what ye shall eat.*—*Bless them that curse you.*—*Do good to them that hate you. that ye may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven; for he maketh the sun to shine on the just and on the unjust. Be ye perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.* What attentive reader does not see, that none of these branches of a Christian's practical profession can grow in the article of death; and that to suppose they can flourish in heaven, is to suppose that Christ says, “Be *thus* and *thus* perfect, when it will be absolutely impossible for you to be *thus* and *thus* perfect? Love your enemies, when all will be your friends: Do good to them that hate you, when all will flame with love towards you? Turn your cheek to the smiters, when the cold hand of death will disable you to move a finger; or when God shall have fixed a great gulf between the smiters and you?”

XII. The same observation holds with respect to that important branch of Christian perfection which we call *perfect self-denial*. *If thine eye offend thee, says our Lord, pluck it out.—If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, &c.* Now can any thing be more absurd, than to put off the *perfect* performance of these severe duties till we die, and totally lose our power over our *eyes* and *hands*? Or, till we arrive at *heaven*, where nothing that *offendeth* can possibly be admitted?

XIII. St. Luke gives us, in the *Acts of the apostles*, a sketch of the perfection of Christians living in community. *The multitude of them that believed, says he, were of one heart and of one soul. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in prayer.—They had all things common: parting their possessions to all, as every man had need;—Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: and continuing daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God.* When I read this description of the *practical* perfection of a Christian church, I am tempted to smile at the mistake of our opponents, and to ask them, if we can eat our meat with gladness in the article of death: or sell our possessions for the relief of our brethren upon earth, when we are gone to heaven?

XIV. Consider we of some of St. Paul's exhortations for the display of the perfection which we contend for, and we shall see in a still stronger light the absurdity that I point out. He says to the Romans—*Present your bodies a living sacrifice: and be not conformed to this present world,—that ye may prove what is that perfect will of God.—Having different gifts, use them all for God; exhorting with diligence, giving with simplicity, showing mercy with cheerfulness, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, communicating to the necessities of the saints, given to hospitality, weeping with them that weep, being of the same mind, condescending to men of low estate, providing things honest in the sight of all men, heaping coals of fire—coals of burning love and melting kindness, on the head of your enemy, by giving him meat, if he be hungry: or drink, if he be thirsty: overcoming thus evil with good.—Again: Exhorting the Corinthians to Christian perfection, he says, Brethren, the time is short.—I would have you without carefulness. It remaineth that those who have wives, be as though they had none; they that weep, as if they wept not; they that rejoice as if they rejoiced not; they that buy, as if they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it. &c.—Once more, stirring up the Philippians to the perfection of humble love, he writes, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye think the same thing, have the same love; being*

of one soul, of one mind. Do nothing through vain glory, but in lowliness of mind esteem each the others better than themselves. Look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who humbled himself and became obedient unto death.—Now all these descriptions of the practical part of Christian perfection, in the very nature of things, cannot be confined to the article of death, much less to our arrival at heaven. For when we are dying, or dead, we cannot present our bodies a living sacrifice;—we cannot use this world as not abusing it:—nor can we look at the things of others, as well as at our own.

XV. The same thing may be said of St. Paul's fine description of Christian perfection under the name of charity. *Charity suffereth long; but at death all our sufferings are cut short. Charity is not provoked: it thinketh no evil: it covereth all things: it rejoiceth not in iniquity. It hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things, &c.* The bare reading of this description shows, that it does not respect the article of death, when we cease to endure any thing: much less does it respect heaven, where we shall have absolutely nothing to endure.

XVI. If a perfect fulfilling of our relative duties be a most important part of *Christian perfection*, how ungenerous, how foolish is it to promise the simple, that they shall be perfect Christians at death, or in heaven! Does not this assertion include all the following absurdities: ye shall perfectly love your husbands and wives in the article of death, when you shall not be able to distinguish your husbands and wives from other men and women: or in heaven, where ye shall be like the angels of God, and have neither husbands nor wives:—Ye shall assist your parents and instruct your children with perfect tenderness, when ye shall be past instructing or assisting them at all:—when they shall be in heaven or in hell—past needing, or past admitting your assistance or instructions. Ye shall inspect your servants in perfect love, or serve your masters with perfect faithfulness, when the relations of master and servant will exist no more. Ye shall perfectly bear with the infirmities of your weak brethren, when ye shall leave all your weak brethren behind, and go where all your brethren will be free from every degree of trying weakness. Ye shall entertain strangers, attend the sick, and visit the prisoners with perfect love, when ye shall give up the ghost, or when ye shall be in paradise, where these duties have no more place than lazaret-houses, sick-beds, prisons, &c.

XVII. Death, far from introducing imperfect Christians into the state of Christian Perfection, will take them out of the very possi-

bility of ever attaining it. This will appear indubitable, if we remember that *Christian perfection* consists in *perfect* repentance, *perfect* faith, *perfect* hope, *perfect* love of an *invisible* God, *perfect* charity for *visible* enemies, *perfect* patience in pain, and *perfect* resignation under losses :—in a constant bridling of our bodily appetites, in an assiduous keeping of our senses, in a cheerful taking up of our cross, in a resolute following of Christ without the camp, and in a deliberate choice to suffer affliction with the children of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Now, so certain as there can be no perfect repentance in the grave, no Christian faith where all is sight, no perfect hope where all is enjoyment, no perfect love of an invisible God or of visible enemies, where God is visible and enemies are invisible ; no bearing pain with perfect patience, when pain is no more ; and suffering affliction with the people of God, where no shadow of affliction lights upon the people of God, &c.—So certain, I say, as death incapacitates us for all these Christian duties, it incapacitates us also for every branch of Christian perfection. Mr. Hill might then as well persuade the simple, that they shall become perfect surgeons and perfect midwives—perfect masons and perfect gardeners, in the grave or beyond it, as to persuade them that they shall become perfect penitents and perfect believers in the article of death, or in the New Jerusalem.

XVIII. From the preceding argument it follows, that the graces of repentance, faith, hope, and Christian charity, or love for an invisible God, for trying friends, and for invisible enemies, must be perfected here or never. If Mr. Hill grant that these graces are, or may be perfected here, he allows all that we contend for. And if he assert, that they shall never be perfected, because there is “no perfection here,” and because the perfection of repentance, &c. can have no more place in heaven than sinning and mourning, I ask, What becomes then of the scriptures which Mr. Hill is so ready to produce, when he defends Calvinian perseverance ? As for God, his work is perfect—Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you (who have always obeyed, Phil. ii. 12.) will perform, or *επιτελει*, will perfect it (if you continue to obey.)—The Lord will perfect what concerneth me.—Praying exceedingly that we (as workers together with God) might perfect that which is lacking in your faith.—Looking unto Jesus the author, and (*τελειωτην* the perfecter of our faith : for he is faithful that promised.)—How can the Lord be faithful, and yet never perfect the repentance and faith of his obedient people ? Will he sow such a blessed seed as that of faith, hope and love to our enemies, and never let a grain of it either miscarry or bring forth fruit

to perfection? Is not this a flat contradiction? How can a pregnant woman *never miscarry*, and yet *never bring forth the fruit* of her womb to any perfection. Such however is the inconsistency which Mr. Hill obtrudes upon us as Gospel. If his doctrine of *Calvinian Perseverance* be true, no believer can miscarry;—no grain of true faith can fail of producing fruit to perfection: and if his doctrine of *Christian Perfection* be true, no believer can be perfect; no grain of faith, repentance, hope, and love for our husbands and wives, can possibly grow to perfection. How different is this doctrine from that of our Lord, who in the parable of the sower, represents all those who do not bear fruit unto perfection, as miscarrying professors!

XIX. If *impatience* were that bodily disorder, which is commonly called the *heartburn*; if *obstinacy* were a crick in the neck;—*pride* an imposthume in the breast;—*raging anger*, a fit of the tooth-ach;—*vanity*, the dropsy;—*disobedience*, a bodily lameness;—*uncharitableness*, the rheumatism;—and *despair*, a broken bone; there would be some sense in the doctrine of *Christian imperfection*, and reason could subscribe to Mr. Hill's creed, for it is certain, that death effectually cures the heartburn, a crick in the neck, the tooth-ach, &c. But what real affinity have *moral disorders* with *bodily death*? And why do our opponents think we maintain a “shocking” doctrine, when we assert, that death has no more power to cure our pride, than old age to remove our covetousness? Nay, do we not see that the most decrepit old age does not cure men even of the grossest lusts of the carnal mind? When old drunkards and fornicators are as unable to indulge their sensual appetites as if they actually ranked among corpses, do they not betray the same inclinations which they showed when the strong tide of their youthful blood joined with the rapid stream of their vicious habits? Is not this a demonstration, that no decay of the body, no, not that complete decay which we call death, has any necessary tendency to alter our moral habits? And do not the ancients set their seal to this observation? Does not Solomon say, that *In the place where the tree falleth there it shall be*? And has Mr. Hill forgotten those remarkable lines of Virgil?

Quæ cura nitentes

Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos?

“Disembodied souls have in the world of spirits the very same dispositions and propensities which they had when they dwelt in the body.”

XX. If God hath appointed death to make an end of heart pollution, and to be our complete saviour from sin, our opponents might

screen their doctrine of a *death purgatory* behind God's appointment ; it being certain that God who can command iron to swim, and fire to cool, could also command the filthy hands of death to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. But we do not read in our Bible either that God ever gave to indwelling sin a lease of any believer's heart for life ; or that he ever appointed the king of terrors to deliver us from the deadly seeds of iniquity. And although the old Testament contains an account of many carnal ordinances adapted to the carnal disposition of the Jews, we do not remember to have read there, *Death shall circumcise thy heart, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart — Death shall sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness Death will cleanse you. Death will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and (when you are dead) ye shall keep my judgments and do them.* And if death was never so far honoured under the Mosaic dispensation, we ask, where he has been invested with higher privileges under the Gospel of Christ ? Is it where St. Paul says, that *Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel ?* It appears to us, that it is a high degree of rashness in the Calvinists, and in the Romanists, to appoint the pangs of death, and the sorrows of hell to do the most difficult, and of consequence, the most glorious work of Christ's Spirit, which is powerfully to *redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people* (not full of all inbred unrighteousness, but *dead to sin, free from sin, pure in heart, and) zealous of good works.* And we should think ourselves far more guilty of impertinence, if we nominated either *Death* or *Hell* to do the office of the *final purifier* of our hearts, than if we ordered a *sexton* to do the office of the *prime minister*, or an *executioner* to act as the king's *physician*.—With respect to salvation from the root, as well as from the branches of sin, we will therefore *know nothing*, as absolutely necessary, but *Jesus Christ and him crucified*, risen again, and ascended on high, that he might send the Holy Ghost to perfect us in love, through a *faith that purifies the heart*, and through a *hope, which if any man hath, he will purify himself even as God is pure.*

XXI. To conclude : if *Christian perfection* implies the *perfect use* of the *whole armour of God*, what can be more absurd than the thought, that we shall be made *perfect Christians* in heaven or at death ? How will Mr. Hill prove that we shall *perfectly* use the helmet of hope, *perfectly* wield the shield of faith, and *perfectly* quench the fiery darts of the devil in heaven, where faith, hope, and the devil's darts, shall never enter ?—Or how will he demonstrate, that a soldier shall perfectly go through his exercise in the article of death, that

is, in the very moment he leaves the army, and for ever puts off the harness ?

Mr. *Baxter* wrote in the last century a vindication of holiness, which he calls, *A Saint, or a Brute* : the title is bold ; but all that can be said to defend iniquity cannot make me think it too strong ; so many are the arguments by which the Scriptures recommend a holy life. And I own to thee, Reader, that when I consider all that can be said in defence of *Christian perfection*, and all the *absurdities* which clog the doctrine of *Christian imperfection*, I am inclined to imitate Mr. *Baxter's* positiveness, and to call this Essay *A perfect Christian in this World, or a perfect Dupe in the next.*

SECTION XIII.

Containing a variety of Arguments, to prove the mischievousness of the Doctrines of Christian Imperfection.

I. THE Arguments of the preceding section are produced to show the *absurdity* of Mr. *Hill's* doctrine of *Christian imperfection* ; those which follow are intended to prove the *mischievousness* of that modish tenet.

I. It strikes at the doctrine of salvation *by faith*. By grace ye are saved *through faith*, not only from the guilt and outward acts of sin, but also from its root and secret buds : *Not of* works*, says the apostle, *lest any man should [Pharisaically] boast* ; and may we not add, *Not of death, lest he that had the power of death, that is, the devil, should [absurdly] boast* ? Does not what strikes at the doctrine of faith, and abridges the salvation which we obtain by it, equally strike at Christ's power and glory ? Is it not the business of faith to receive Christ's *saving word*, to apprehend the power of his sanctifying Spirit, and to inherit all the great promises, by which *he saves his penitent, believing people from their sins* ? Is it not evident, that if no believers can be *saved*

* Here, and in some other places St. Paul by works means only the *deeds* of a Christless, anti-mediatorial law, and the obedience paid to the *Jewish covenant*, which is frequently called the *law*, in opposition to the *Christian covenant*, which is commonly called the *Gospel*, i. e. the Gospel of Christ, because *Christ's Gospel* is the most excellent of all the Gospel dispensations. The apostle, therefore, by the expression *not of works*, does by no means exclude from *final salvation* the *law of faith*, and the works done in obedience to that law : for, in the preceding verse, he secures the *obedience of faith* when he says, *Ye are saved*, i. e. made partakers of the blessing of the Christian dispensation *by grace through faith*. Here then the word *by grace*, secures the *first Gospel axiom*, and the word *through faith*, secures the *second*.

from indwelling sin through faith, we must correct the apostle's doctrine, and say, *By grace ye are saved from the remains of sin through death?* And can unprejudiced Protestants admit so Christ-debasing, Death-exalting a tenet, without giving a dangerous blow to the genuine doctrines of the Reformation?

II. It dishonours Christ as a *Prophet*, for as such he came to teach us to be now *meek and lowly in heart*: but the imperfect Gospel of the day teaches, that we must necessarily continue passionate and proud in heart till death; for *pride and immoderate anger* are, I apprehend, two main branches of *indwelling sin*. Again: my motto demonstrates, that he publicly taught the multitudes the doctrine of perfection, and Mr. Hill insinuates that this doctrine is, "shocking," not to say "blasphemous."

III. It disgraces Christ as the *Captain of our salvation*. For St. Paul says, that our Captain furnishes us with *weapons mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds*, and to the bringing of every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. But our opponents represent the devil's strong hold as absolutely impregnable. No weapons of our warfare can pull down Apollyon's throne. *Inbred sin* shall maintain its place in man's heart till death strike the victorious blow. Christ may indeed fight against the *Jericho* within, as *Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon*: but then he must send for *Death*, as *Joab sent for David*, saying, *I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the City of waters: now therefore, gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called after my name*, 2 Sam. xii. 27, 28.

IV. It pours contempt upon him as the *Surety of the new covenant*, in which God has engaged himself to deliver obedient believers from their enemies, that they may serve him without (tormenting) fear all the days of their lives; for how does he execute his office in this respect, if he never sees that such believers be delivered from their most oppressive and inveterate enemy, *indwelling sin*? Or if that deliverance take place only at death, how can they, in consequence of their death freedom, serve God without fear all the days of their lives.

V. It affronts Christ as a *King*, when it represents the believer's heart, which is Christ's spiritual throne, as being necessarily full of *indwelling sin*,—a spiritual rebel, who notwithstanding the joint efforts of Christ and the believer, maintains his ground against them both during the term of life.—Again: Does not a good king deliver his loyal subjects from oppression, and avenge them of a tyrannical adversary, when they cry to him in their distress? But does our Lord show himself such a king, if he never avenge them, nor turn

the usurper, the murderer *sin*, out of their breasts?—Once more. If our deliverance from sin depend upon the stroke of death, and not upon a stroke of Christ's grace, might we not call upon *the king of terrors*, as well as upon *the King of saints*, for deliverance from the remains of sin? But where is the difference between saying, *O Death, help us*, and crying, *O Baal, save us*?

VI. It injures Christ as a *Restorer* of pure, spiritual worship in God's spiritual temple—the heart of man. For it indirectly represents him as a Pharisaic Saviour, who made much ado about driving, with a whip, harmless sheep and oxen out of his Father's material temple; but who gives full leave to Satan not only to bring *sheep and doves* into the believer's heart; but also to harbour and breed there, *during the term of life*, the swelling toad, pride; and the hissing viper, envy; to say nothing of the greedy dog avarice, and the filthy swine impurity; under pretence of "*exercising the patience, and engaging the industry*" of the worshippers, if we may believe the Calvin of the day. See the Argument against Christian Perfection at the end of this section.

VII. It insults Christ as a *Priest*, for our Melchisedec shed his all-cleansing blood upon the cross, and now pours his all-availing prayer before the throne; asking, that, upon evangelical terms, we may now be *cleansed from all unrighteousness, and perfected in one*. But if we assert that believers, let them be ever so faithful, can never be thus cleansed and perfected in one till death comes to the Saviour's assistance, do we not place our Lord's cleansing blood, and powerful intercession, and of consequence his priesthood, in an unscriptural and contemptible light?

Should Mr. *Hill* attempt to retort this argument by saying, "That it is our doctrine, not his, which derogates from the honour of Christ's priesthood, because we should no longer need our High Priest's blood, if we were cleansed from all sin:" I reply:

1. Perfect Christians need as much the virtue of Christ's blood, to prevent the guilt and pollution of sin from returning, as imperfect Christians want it to drive that guilt and pollution away. It is not enough that the blood of the true paschal Lamb has been sprinkled upon our souls to keep off the destroyer: it must still remain there to hinder his coming back *with seven other spirits more wicked than himself*.—2. Mr. *Hill* is in the dark; he calls for a light; and when it is brought he observes, the darkness of the room is now totally removed. Is it so, Sir? replies his footman; then you need these candles no more; if they have totally removed the darkness of your apartment, you have no more need of them. Mr. *Hill* smiles at

the absurdity of his servant's argument: and yet, it is well if he does not admire the wisdom of my opponent's objection.—3. The hearts of perfect Christians are cleansed, and kept clean by *faith*; and Christian perfection means the perfection of Christian faith, whose property it is to endear Christ and his blood more and more; nothing then can be less reasonable than to say, that, upon our principles, perfect believers have done with the atoning blood.—4. Such believers continually *overcome the accuser of the brethren, through the blood of the Lamb*: there is no moment, therefore, in which they can spare it: they are *feeble* believers who can yet dispense with its constant application: and hence it is, that they continue *feeble*. None make so much use of Christ's blood as perfect Christians. Once it was only their *medicine*, which they took now and then, when a fit of fear, or a pang of guilt, obliged them to it; but now it is the Divine *preservative*, which keeps off the infection of sin. Now it is the reviving *cordial*, which they take to prevent their *growing weary, or faint in their minds*: now it is their daily *drink*: now it is what they sprinkle their every thought, word, and work with: in a word, it is that blood which constantly *speaks* before God and in their consciences *better things than the blood of Abel*, and actually procures for them all the blessings which they enjoy or expect. To say, therefore, that the doctrine of Christian perfection supersedes the need of Christ's blood, is not less absurd than to assert that the perfection of navigation renders the great deep ■ useless reservoir of water. Lastly, are not the saints before the throne perfectly sinless? And who are more ready than they to extol the blood and sing the song of the Lamb; *to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory, &c.*? If an angel preached to them the modern Gospel, and desired them to plead for the remains of sin, lest they should lose their peculiar value for the atoning blood; would not they all suspect him to be an angel of darkness transforming himself into an angel of light? And shall *we* be the dupes of the tempter, who deceives good men, that they may deceive us by a similar argument?

VIII. It discredits Christ as the *Fulfiller* of the Father's promise, and as the *Sender* of the indwelling, abiding Comforter, in order that our joy may be full: for the Spirit never takes his *constant* abode as a Comforter in a heart full of *indwelling sin*. If he visit such a heart with his consolations, it is only as a *guest that tarrieth but a day*. When he enters a soul fraught with inbred corruption, he rather acts as a *Reprover* than as a *Comforter*; throwing down the tables of the spiritual money-changers; hindering the vessels which are not

holiness unto the Lord, from being carried through God's spiritual temple, and expelling, according to the degree of our faith, whatsoever would make God's house a *den of thieves*.

But instead of this, Mr. Hill's doctrine considers the heart of a believer as a *den of lions*; and represents Christ's Spirit, not as the *destroyer*, but as the *keeper* of the wild beasts, and evil tempers which dwell therein. This I conclude from these words of the Rev. Mr. Toplady.—“They (indwelling sin and unholy tempers) do not quite expire, till the renewed soul is taken up from earth to heaven. In the mean time these heated remains of depravity will, too often, like prisoners in a dungeon, crawl towards the window, though in chains, and show themselves through the grate. Nay, I do not know whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery, be not frequently more violent in a regenerate person, than even in one who is dead in trespasses; as wild beasts are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded.”—See *Caveat against Unsound Doctrines*, page 65.—When I read this Gospel, I cannot but throw in a Caveat against Mr. Toplady's Caveat. For if his be not *unsound*, every body must allow it to be *uncomfortable* and *unsafe*. Who would not think it dreadfully dangerous to dwell with one wild beast that cannot be killed, unless we are first killed ourselves? but how much more dangerous is it to be condemned to dwell for life with a number of them, which are not only immortal so long as we are alive, but *are sometimes more rampant and furious for their being wounded*. The Saviour preached by Mr. Toplady only wounds the Egyptian dragon, the inward Pharaoh, and makes him rage, but our Jesus drowns him in the sea of his own blood, barely by stretching out the rod of his power, when we stretch out to him our arms of faith. Mr. Hill's Redeemer only takes Agag prisoner, as double-minded Saul did; but our Redeemer *hews him in pieces* as upright Samuel. The Christ or the Calvinists says, “Confine the enemy: though he may possibly be fiercer than before.” But ours *thrusts out the enemy before us*, and says, Destroy, Deut. xxxiii. 27. O ye preachers of *finished salvation*, we leave it to your candour to decide which of these doctrines brings most glory to the saving name of Jesus.

IX. The doctrine of our *necessary* continuance in indwelling sin to our last moments, makes us naturally overlook or despise the *exceeding great and precious promises* given unto us, that by these we might be *partakers of the divine nature*, that is, of God's perfect holiness; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, 2 Pet. i. 4. and thus it naturally defeats the full effect of evangelical truths and ministerial labours: an effect this, which is thus described by

St. Paul; *teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*, i. e. perfect according to the richest dispensation of divine grace, which is the *Gospel of Christ Jesus*. Col. i. 28. —Again, *The Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works*, 2. Tim. iii. 16. Now we apprehend that the perfection which thoroughly furnishes believers unto all good works, is a perfection productive of all the good works [evangelically as well as providentially] prepared that we should walk in them before death: because [whatever Mr. Hill may insinuate to the contrary in England, and Father Walsh at Paris,] the Scriptures say, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, [in death, i. e.] in the grave whither thou goest*. For as the tree falls so it lies: if it falls full of rottenness with a brood of vipers, and a never-dying worm in its hollow centre, it will continue in that very condition; and wo to the man who trusts that the pangs of death will kill the worm, or that a purgative fire will spare the rotten wood and consume the vipers.

X. It defeats in part the end of the *Gospel precepts*, to the fulfilling of which *Gospel promises* are but means. *All the law, the prophets, and the apostolic writings, hang on these two commandments*: “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself, through penitential faith in the light of thy dispensation; that is, in two words, thou shalt be evangelically perfect*. Now if we believe that it is absolutely impossible to be thus perfect by keeping these two blessed commandments in faith, we cannot but believe also that God, who requires us to keep them, is defective in *wisdom, equity, and goodness*, by requiring us to do what is absolutely impossible; and we represent our church as a wicked stepmother, who betrays all her children into the wanton commission of perjury, by requiring of every one of them, in the sacrament of baptism, a most solemn vow, by which they bind themselves in the presence of God, and of the congregation, that they will keep God’s holy will and commandments,” [i. e. that they will keep God’s evangelical law] “and walk in the same all the days of their life.”

XI. It has a necessary tendency to unnerve our deepest prayers. How can we pray in faith that God would help us to *do his will on earth as it is done in heaven*, or that he would *cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, that we may perfectly love him and worthily magnify his holy name*: —How can we, I say, ask this in faith, if we disbelieve the very possibility of having these petitions answered? And what poor encouragement had *Epaphras*, upon the scheme which we oppose, *always to labour fervently for the Colossians in prayer, that they might*

stand perfect and complete in the will of God: or St. Paul to wish that the very God of peace would sanctify the Thessalonians wholly, and that their whole spirit, and soul, and body might be preserved blameless, if these requests could not be granted before death, and were unavoidably to be granted to them and to all believers in the article thereof?

XII. It soothes lukewarm, unholy professors, and encourages them to sit quietly under the vine of Sodom, and under their own barren fig-tree: I mean under the baneful influence of their *unbelief* and *indwelling sin*; nothing being more pleasing to the carnal mind than this siren song; “it is absolutely impossible that the thoughts of your hearts should be cleansed in this life. God himself does not expect that you should be purified from all iniquity on this side the grave. It is proper that sin should dwell in your hearts by unbelief, to endear Christ to you, and so to *work together for your good*.” The preachers of mere morality insinuate, that God does not forgive sins before death. This dangerous, uncomfortable doctrine, damps the faith of penitents, who think it absurd to expect *before death* what they are taught they can only receive *at death*. And as it is with the pardon of sins, so it is also with *cleansing from all unrighteousness*. The preachers of Christian imperfection tell their hearers that nobody can be cleansed from *heart sin before death*. This new doctrine makes them secretly trust in ■ *death purgatory*, and hinders them from pleading in faith the promises of full sanctification before death stares them in the face; while others, like spared Agag, madly venture upon the spear of the king of terrors with their hearts full of indwelling sin. The dead tell no tales now, but it will be well if, in the day of the resurrection, those who plead for the *necessary* indwelling of sin during the term of life, do not meet in the great day with some deluded souls, who will give them no thanks for betraying them, to their last moments, into the hands of indwelling sin, by insinuating that there can be no deliverance from our evil tempers before we are ready to exchange a death-bed for a coffin.

XIII. It greatly discourages willing Israelites, and weakens the hands of the faithful spies, who want to lead feeble believers on, and to take by force the kingdom which consists in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*: nothing being more proper to damp their ardour than such ■ speech as this: “You may strive against your corruptions and evil tempers as long as you please: but you shall never get rid of them; the *Jericho* within is impregnable: it is fenced up to heaven, and garrisoned by the tall, invincible, immortal sons of Anak: so strong are these adversaries, that the twelve apostles, with the help of Christ and the Holy Ghost could never turn one of them

out of his post. Nay, they so *buffeted* and overpowered St. Paul, the most zealous of the apostles, that they fairly took him prisoner, *sold him under sin*, and made him groan to the last, *O wretched, carnal, man that I am, who shall deliver me from the law of my inbred corruptions, which brings me into captivity to the law of sin : I thank God through death.* So then *with the flesh* you must, as well as St. Paul, *serve the law of sin* till you die. Nor need you fret at these tidings ; for they are the pure Gospel of Christ—the genuine doctrines of *free grace*, and *Christian liberty*.* In Christ you are free, but in yourselves you must continue to serve the law of sin : and indeed why should you not do it, since *the sins of a Christian are for his good*, and even *the dung of a sheep of Christ* is of some use—nay, of the most excellent use, if we believe Mr. Hill ; for the most *grievous falls*—falls into repeated acts of adultery and deliberate murder, serve to make us know our place, to drive us nearer to Christ, and to make us sing louder the praises of restoring grace.” Besides, that gentleman represents those who preach deliverance from indwelling sin before we go into a death purgatory, as “men of a Pharisaic cast—blind men, who never saw their own hearts—proud men, who oppose the righteousness of God,—vain men, who aspire at robbing Christ of the glory of being *alone without sin*, in short, men who hold doctrines which are *shocking, not to say blasphemous*.”

How would this speech damp our desires after salvation from indwelling sin ! How would it make us hug the cursed chains of our inbred corruptions if the cloven foot of the imperfect, unchaste *Diana*, which it holds out to public view without Gospel sandals, were not sufficient to shock us back from this impure Gospel to the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ ! And yet (if I am not mistaken) this dangerous speech only unfolds the scope of Mr. Hill’s “*Creed for Perfectionists*.”

XIV. To conclude : the modish doctrine of Christian imperfection and death purgatory, is so contrived, that carnal men will always prefer the purgatory of the Calvinists to that of the Papists. For the Papists prescribe I know not how many cups of divine wrath and dire vengeance, which ought to be drunk by the souls of the believers who die *half* purged, or *three parts* cleansed. These *half damned* or a *quarter damned* creatures must go through a severe discipline, and fiery salvation in the very suburbs of hell, before they can be perfectly purified. But our opponents have found out a way to deliver *half-hearted* believers out of all fear in this respect. Such believers need not *utterly abolish the body of sin* in this world. The inbred man of sin not only *may*, but he shall, live as long as we do. You

will possibly ask : " What is to become of this sinful guest ? Shall he take us to hell, or shall we take him to heaven ? If he cannot die in this world, will Christ destroy him in the next ? " No : here Christ is almost left out of the question by those who pretend to be determined to *know nothing but Christ and him crucified*. Our indwelling adversary is not destroyed by the brightness of the Redeemer's spiritual appearing, but by the gloom of the appearance of death. Thus they have found another Jesus—another Saviour from sin. The king of terrors comes to the assistance of Jesus's sanctifying grace, and instantaneously delivers the carnal believer from indwelling pride, unbelief, covetousness, peevishness, uncharitableness, love of the world, and inordinate affection. Thus the clammy sweats, brought on by the greedy monster, kill, it seems, the tree of sin, of which the blood of Christ could only kill the buds ! The dying sinner's breath does the capital work of the Spirit of holiness ! And by the most astonishing of all miracles, the faint, infectious, last gasp of a sinful believer, blows away, in the twinkling of an eye, the great mountain of inward corruption, which all the means of grace, all the faith, prayers, and sacraments of twenty, perhaps of forty years ; with all the love in the heart of our Zerubbabel, all the blood in his veins, all the power in his hands, and all the faithfulness in his breast, were never able to remove ! If this doctrine be true, how greatly was St. Paul mistaken when he said, *The sting of death is sin*, &c. *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Christ our Lord !* Should he not have said, *Death is the cure of sin*, instead of saying, *sin is the sting of death ?* And should not his praises flow thus, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through death*, our great and only deliverer from our greatest and fiercest enemy, *indwelling sin ?*

SECTION XIV.

An Answer to the Arguments by which the Imperfectionists support the Doctrine of the necessary Indwelling of Sin in all Believers till they go into the Death Purgatory.

THE pleasing effect of the *lights* in a picture, is considerably heightened by the bold opposition of strong *shades*. If the preceding arguments are the *lights*, by which we hope agreeably to strike the mental eyes of the reader, who candidly considers the doctrine of *Christian perfection*, it will not be improper to heighten those *lights* by the amazing contrast of the arguments, which our opponents

advance in defence of *indwelling sin*, and *Christian imperfection*. These arguments appear to us *shades*,—*bold*, logical shades: but the *bolder* they are, the more they will set off the lustre of the truth which we recommend: for, if *all things work for good to them that love God*, why should not all the errors of others, work for good to them that love the truth? I am abundantly furnished with the erroneous shades I want, by three of the most approved authors, who support the ark of the imperfect Gospel, the Rev. Mr. *Toplady*, author of the *Historic Proof of Calvinism*:—the Rev. Mr. *Martin*, author of several Tracts, which are esteemed by the Calvinists:—and the Rev. Mr. *Henry*, famous for his voluminous exposition of the Bible.

The first of these authors, in his *Caveat against Unsound Doctrine*, intimates that there never were, on earth, but three persons possessed of the sinless perfection which we contend for; *Adam*, *Eve*, and *Jesus Christ*:—A bold intimation this, which, like the *Babel* I attack, has its foundation in *Confusion*:—in the confusion of three perfections which are entirely different;—the *Paradisiacal*, sinless perfection of our first parents: the *Mediatorial*, sinless perfection of *Jesus Christ*; and the *Christian* evangelically sinless perfection of *St. John*. This intimation is supported by some passages from *Solomon*, which have been already considered in Sect. XI. and by the following Argument.

ARG. I. “A person of the amplest fortune cannot help the harbouring of snakes, toads, &c. on his lands; but they will breed, and nestle, and crawl about his estate whether he will or no. All he can do is to pursue and kill them whenever they make their appearance: yet let him be ever so vigilant and diligent, there will always be a succession of those creatures, *to exercise his patience, and engage his industry*. So it is with the true believer, in respect to *indwelling sin*.” *Caveat against Unsound Doctrines*, page 54. To this we answer:

1. From the clause which I produce in Italics in this argument, one would think that *patience* and *industry* cannot be properly exercised without *indwelling sin*. If so, does it not follow, that our Lord's *patience* and *industry* always wanted proper exercise, because he was always perfectly free from *indwelling sin*? We are of a different sentiment with respect to our Lord's Christian virtues: and we apprehend that the *patience* and *industry* of the most perfect believer, will always, without the opposition of *indwelling sin*, find full exercise in doing and suffering the whole will of God: in keeping the body under; in striving against the sin of others; in testifying by word and deed that the works of the world are evil; in resisting the number-

less temptations of him, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and in preparing to conflict with the king of terrors.

2. Why could not assiduous vigilance clear an estate of snakes, as one of our kings cleared Great Britain of wolves? Did he not attempt and accomplish what appeared impossible to less resolute minds? Mr. *Toplady* is too well acquainted with the Classics not to know what the heathens themselves have said of industry and love:

Omnia vincit amor.—Labor improbus omnia vincit.

If "*Love and incessant labour overcome the greatest difficulties*," what cannot a diligent believer do, who is animated by the love of God, and feels that he can do all things through Christ who strengthens him?

3. But the capital flaw of Mr. *Toplady's* argument consists in so considering the weakness of free will, as entirely to leave God and the sanctifying power of his Spirit out of the question. That gentleman forgets, that for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Nor does he consider, that a worm, assisted by Omnipotence itself, is capable of the greatest achievements. Of this we have an illustrious instance in *Moses*, with respect to the removal of the lice, the frogs, and the locusts. *Moses* entreated the Lord, and the Lord turned a mighty, strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt, Exodus x. 19. If Mr. *Toplady* had not forgot the mighty God, with whom *Moses* and believers have to do, he would never have supposed that the comparison holds good between Christ cleansing the thoughts and heart of a praying believer by the inspiration of his holy Spirit, and a man who can by no means destroy the snakes and toads that breed, nestle, and crawl about his estate.

4. The Reverend Author of the *Caveat* sinks in this argument, even below the doctrine of heathen moralists. For, suppose the extirpation of a vicious habit were considered, would not a beathen be inexcusable, if he overlooked the succour and inspiration of the Almighty? And what shall we say of a Gospel minister, who, writing upon the destruction of sin, entirely overlooks what at other times he calls the sovereign, matchless, all-conquering, irresistible power of divine grace, which (if we believe him) is absolutely to do all in us and for us?—Who insinuates, that the toad, pride, and the viper, envy, must continue to nestle and crawl in our breasts for want of ability to destroy them; and who concludes that the extirpation of sin is impos-

sible, because we cannot bring it about by our own strength? Just as if the power of God, which *helps our infirmities*, did not deserve a thought! Who does not see, that when a Divine argues in this manner, he puts his bushel upon the light of Christ's *victorious* grace, hides this sin-killing and heart-cleansing light, and then absurdly concludes that the darkness of sin *must necessarily* remain in all believers? Thus, if I mistake not, it appears, that Mr. *Toplady's* argument in favour of the death purgatory, is contrary to history, experience, and *Gentilism*; and how much more to *Christianity*, and to the honour of him who *to the uttermost saves his believing people from their heart-toads and bosom-vipers*, when they go to him for this great salvation!

The next author who shall furnish me with logical shades, is the ingenious and Rev. Mr. *Martin*, who has just published a plea for the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers. He calls it, "*The Christian's peculiar Conflict, An Essay on Galatians v. 17.*" And from it I extract the arguments which follow.

ARG. II. (page 15.) &c. "O ye vain boasters of inherent perfection, say, Where is the man among you to be found, who always *doth the things that he would*? If there be one who has this pre-eminence among his brethren, why should his name be concealed? Is he a preacher? and dare he assert he has, at all times, that discovery of the truth to his own soul he could wish, &c. Is he a private Christian? and will he venture to declare, that in every character he sustains, &c. he continually acts not only the conscientious part, but in every respect fulfils the desire of his mind? What! does he hesitate? Is he afraid to attest this in the presence of a heart-searching God? How deceitful then is his confidence! &c. Strange infatuation! If he cannot at all times do the things, the good things that he would, can he suppose his best desires are more extensive than that law which is exceeding broad? &c. If he can be so vain as to suppose this, there is more hope of a fool than of him, who is so wise in his own conceit. If he disown the inference, and yet maintain his premises, that he is perfect, i. e. without sin, has ceased to commit iniquity, what is the conclusion? I am obliged to conclude, that perfection and imperfection, things as contrary to each other as light and darkness, are, with such a deluded person, considered as one and the same thing."

This argument, stript of its rhetorical ornaments, and put into a plain, logical dress, runs thus:

"When Christians do not do all the good things which they *desire* to do, they sin, or break God's law, which is purer and broader than their *desires*:—But the best ministers, and the best private Christians

do not do all the good things which they desire to do:—And therefore the best ministers, and the best private Christians *sin*, and their sinless perfection is an empty boast.” We may bring the argument into a still narrower compass, thus: “All *deficiencies* are sinful, and therefore inconsistent with every kind of perfection.” Now this proposition, which is the basis of the whole argument, has error for its foundation. Granting that *deficiencies* are inconsistent with the absolute will of God, and with the perfection of his boundless power, I affirm four things, each of which, if I mistake not, overturns our objector’s argument.

1. The separate *spirits of just men made perfect* are perfectly sinless; nevertheless they do not do all the good that they would; for they have not yet prevailed to get the blood of God’s martyrs avenged:—a display of justice this, which they ardently wish for. And I prove it by these words of St. John; *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!* Rev. vi. 9. Had they done what they wished, i. e. actually prevailed with God, their prayer would have been immediately turned into praises, and persecutors would long ago have been rooted out from the earth.

2. For want of *infinite* wisdom, does not *perfect* love in *finite* creatures frequently desire to do more for its object than it can? When Michael fought with the dragon, is it not highly probable that he lovingly desired to hinder his cruel adversary from doing any farther mischief? But did not his performance fall short of his pious *resigned* desire?—May not this be said also of the guardian care of the angels who minister to the heirs of salvation? Do these loving spirits afford us all the help, or procure us all the bliss, which their tender compassion prompts them to *wish* us?—If not; is it not absurd to suppose, that, barely on this account, they are *sinfully* imperfect? Nay, would it not be a high degree of rashness and injustice to insinuate, that they are transgressors of God’s spiritual law; and that his commandment, which is broader than their *desires*, is broken by their not doing us all the good which they *desire* to do us, and which they would actually do us, if a wise Providence had not set bounds to their commission? Does not this unscriptural Calvinian *legality* put the stamp of *sinfulness* upon all angels and archangels, merely to keep in countenance the Antinomian doctrine of the *necessary sinfulness* of all believers?

3. If we consider our Lord himself as a *man*, did he do all the good he would while he was upon earth? Did he preach as successfully as his *perfect* love made him desire to do? If he had all

the success he desired in his ministry, why did he look round upon his hearers with anger : being grieved for the hardness of their hearts ? Why did he weep and complain, *How often would I have gathered you, &c. and ye would not ?*—Were even his private instructions so much blessed to his own disciples as he could have wished ? If they were, what meant these strange expostulations, *How is it that ye have no faith ?—Faithless generation, how long shall I be with you ?—Hast thou been so long with me, Philip, and has thou not known me ?—Will ye also go away ?*

Nay, had not Christ his *innocent infirmities* too ? Did he not shudder at the prospect of the cup of trembling ! Needed he not the strengthening support of an angel in the garden of Gethsemane ? Did he not offer up prayers, with strong cryings and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death ? Was he not heard in that he feared ? Heb. v. 7.—Did he not innocently cry out upon the cross, *My God ! My God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?* And does not the apostle observe, that, *We have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities : but [one who] was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin ?* Heb. iv. 15. When our opponents therefore, confound *sin* with natural, *innocent infirmities*, or with our not doing all the good we would, do they not inadvertently fix a blot upon the immaculate character of Him who could say ; *Which of you convinceth me of sin ?*

4. My pious opponent wishes, no doubt, to praise God as perfectly as an angel ; whilst an angel probably desires to do it as completely as an archangel ; but in the nature of things this cannot be. Thousands of God's moral vessels, which are perfect in their place and degree, and as such adorn God's universal temple, fall short of each other's perfection, without being sinfully imperfect on that account. When deficiencies are natural, and not moral, if we call them *sin*, in many cases we charge God with the creation of *sin*. Nor is it any more *sin* in a man, not to magnify God so vigorously as an angel, or an angel not to serve his Creator so perfectly as an archangel ; than it is a sin in a good soldier, not to do the king such excellent service as an experienced captain, or a consummate general. In the moral world, as well as in the natural, one star may differ from another star in glory, without the least disparagement to its peculiar perfection. The injudicious refinements of Calvinism make a confused jumble of God's works, as they do of God's truths, and of the various perfections which belong to the various classes of his children : but a wise dispenser of the word will do by these various truths and perfections as Joseph did by his brothers : he placed them the first-born according to his

birthright, (or superiority) and the youngest according to his youth (or inferiority.)

5. We are not ashamed to assert, that *perfection* in one respect, and *imperfection* in another respect, may consistently meet in the same subject; or, that men and things may be perfect in one sense and *imperfect* in another. If our opponents ridicule us for it, we will present them with an ocular, and by no means “metaphysical” demonstration of their mistake. Two *perfect* grains, the one of *barley*, and the other of *wheat*, lie before us. I say with the perfectionists, that the grain of barley is *perfect* in its kind; but *imperfect*, or inferior in excellence when it is compared to the grain of wheat. But Mr. *Martin*, at the head of the imperfectionists, thinks me deluded, and placing himself in his judgment-seat, gravely says, “I am obliged to conclude that *perfection* and *imperfection*, things as contrary to each other as light and darkness, are with such a deluded person considered as one and the same.”—“Some are so unaccountably absurd and ridiculous.”—Reader, thou art judge and jury. Pronounce which of the two deserves best this imputation of “unaccountable absurdity,” the author of *this* Essay, or that of the *Essay on Gal. v. 17*.

6. With respect to this gentleman’s triumphant question, *Where is the (perfect) man?—Why should his name be concealed?* I hope it has already been satisfactorily answered in Sect. IV. Arg. XII. To what is advanced there, I add here the following remark. Inveterate prejudice is blind. If it believe not reason, *Moses*, the *prophets*, and the *apostles*, neither would it be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And were we to point at a person as perfect as *Jesus of Nazareth*, and to say, *Behold the man*, I should not wonder if the prepossessed professors cried out, as some ancient engrossers of orthodoxy did, *He is a deceiver of the people, teaching perfection throughout all Jewry*. And if they did not say, *He is the friend of publicans and sinners, away with him*; it is not improbable they would say, *He is a friend of the Pharisees and Arminians, why do you hear him? Would ye also be his disciples?* It is in vain to hope, that prejudice expired with those who scoffed at *perfection incarnate*, and spit in the face of *Jesus Christ: thinking to do God and the Messiah service*. Man is man, in London, as well as in Jerusalem. Our Author goes on:

ARG. III. (page 18.) “It is not more essential to those who are partakers of the grace of God in truth, to desire this, [the destruction of *sin*,] than it is for every creature, as such, to desire an exemption from *pain and shame*.”—Then follows a dangerous *insinuation*, that we must say by the cup of *indwelling sin* as our Saviour did by

the cup of *pain and shame*; “*The cup that my Father giveth me, shall I not drink of it?*”

ANS. Never was a cup of subtle poison more artfully mixed! And that the reader may not suspect any mischief, the author borrows the very cup which our heavenly Father presented to Christ in the garden of Gethsemane; a cup of *pain and shame*. Reader, examine this cup before thou drink it. Death is in it. Pour out the new wine which makes the poison it contains palatable, and at the bottom thou wilt find this mortal sediment. “It is as absurd absolutely to desire deliverance from *sin* in this life, as absolutely to desire deliverance from *pain and shame*.” To discover the falsehood of this proposition we need only weigh the following remarks. 1. Man mixed for himself the *moral* cup of *sin*, and God, to punish him, mixed the *natural* cup of *pain and shame*.—2. It is excessively wrong so to confound *moral* and *natural* evil, as to say, that because we cannot with any propriety, absolutely pray for deliverance from *all natural* evil in this life, we ought not absolutely to ask and expect deliverance from *all moral* evil before death.—3. When the Imperfectionists confound the *moral* cup of *sin* with the *natural* cup of *shame and pain*, they are as grossly mistaken, as if they confounded poison and counter-poison;—*sin*, and its punishment;—the murderer’s revengeful heart, and the gallows on which he is hanged.—4. *Shame and pain*, when they are appointed for a trial of faith, and endured for righteousness sake, compose the last and greatest of all the beatitudes; a beatitude this, of which our Lord drank so deeply, when *for the joy that was set before him, he endured the pain, and despised the shame of the cross*, Heb. xii. 2. But where was *indwelling sin* ever ranked among the ingredients which compose the *beatitudes*, that our opponents should thus confound it with *pain and shame*?—5. When they insinuate, that we must bear with *sin* as patiently as with *pain and shame*, the *moral* cup of *indwelling iniquity*, as readily as the *natural* cup of *outward affliction*, do they not grossly confound *the cup of devils* with *the cup of the Lord*, and make the simple believe, that because we must patiently drink the latter *with Christ*, we must also patiently drink the former *with Belial*?—The Captain of our salvation bids us *rejoice and be exceeding glad*, when we patiently suffer *pain and shame* for righteousness sake; therefore, absolutely to deprecate all *pain and shame* would be to pray against our *exceeding great joy*; yea, against our *reigning with Christ*: for only *if we suffer, shall we also reign with him*. But where does Christ bid us *rejoice and be exceeding glad* when we are full of *indwelling sin*? Or where does he promise that *if we harbour indwelling sin, we shall also reign*

with him?—Christians, awake! we pour out this rank poison before you, that you may advert to its offensive smell: while rash Solifidians gather it up, as if it were the honey of Canaan; boldly trample it under foot, and be ye more and more persuaded, that righteousness Calvinistically imputed, and indwelling sin, are the two arms in which the Delilah of the Imperfectionists clasps her deluded admirers.

Page 31. Our ingenious author proposes an *important question*. “If the grace of God, (says he) be so abundant as the Scriptures represent it, and the Scripture cannot be broken; why are believers permitted to struggle so long for that victory they cannot yet obtain?” that victory which death is to bring them?—“Whence is it that they, who pant for purity, should not immediately obtain a request so desirable?”—For our author lays it down as an undoubted truth, that “*Flesh and spirit mutually lust, desire and strive to obtain a complete conquest, but at present,*” i. e. in this life, “*neither can prevail.*”

Page 26.

This important question we answer thus. Imperfect Christians do not attain perfect purity of heart:—1. Because they do not see the need of it:—because they still hug some accursed thing, or because the burden of *indwelling sin* is not yet become intolerable to them. They make shift to bear it yet, as they do the toothach, when they are still loath to have a rotten tooth pulled out.—2. If they are truly willing to be made clean, they do not yet believe that the Lord both *can* and *will* make them clean; or that *now is the day of this salvation*. And, as faith inherits the promises of God, it is no wonder if their unbelief miss this portion of their inheritance.—3. If they have some faith in the promises that the Lord *can*, and *will* *circumcise their hearts*, that they may love him with all their hearts; yet it is not that kind or degree of faith, which makes them completely willing to sell all, to deny themselves, faithfully to use their *inferior* talent, and to continue instant in prayer for this very blessing. In short, they have not, because they ask not, which is the case of the Laodicean imperfectionists; or because they ask amiss, which is the case of the imperfect perfectionists.—4. Frequently also they will receive God’s blessing in their own pre-conceived method, and not in God’s appointed way. Hence God suspends the operation of his sanctifying Spirit, till they humbly confess their obstinacy and false wisdom, as well as their unbelief and want of perfect love. Thus we clear our *Sanctifier*, and take the shame of our impurity to ourselves. Not so our opponents. They exculpate themselves, and insinuate, that God has appointed the *necessary* continuance of indwelling sin in us for life, that the conflict which we maintain with that enemy may answer

excellent ends. Their arguments collected in the above-quoted *Essay*, are produced and answered in the following pages.

ARG. IV. (page 37, &c.) “By this warfare the Lord manifests and magnifies himself to his people; and if I am not mistaken, &c. the continuance of it is a mean by which believers have such views of the perfections and glory of God, as it does not seem to us probable, they could here obtain without it.”—Then our author instances in God’s “*unchanging love towards the elect*,” and in his “*sovereign grace—that reigns through righteousness to the salvation of the guilty*.”—He next observes, that “*Those believers who are most conscious of this internal conflict—most sensible of the power and prevalency of indwelling sin—are most thankful that the endearing declarations of God’s distinguishing love are true*.”—And [page 39, 40.] we are distinctly told that the doctrine of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin *magnifies* “the power and patience of God: the power of God to support us under this conflict, and his patience in bearing with our manifold weakness and ingratitude.”—For, great as the burden of our *ingratitude* is, “*yet he fainteth not, neither is he weary*.”

This is an extract of our author’s argument, which, like a *snake*, works its way through verbose windings, where I have not leisure to follow it. Crush this *snake*, and out will come this less viper: the longer sin continues in us, the more God’s sovereign love, grace, power, and patience, by which he saves *guilty, weak, and ungrateful* sinners is manifested unto us. Or, if you please, the longer we continue in sin, or the longer sin continues in us, the more is grace manifested and magnified.—Or, if you will speak as the apostolic controvertist, Let us *continue in sin that grace may abound*.—A notion this, which is the very soul of Antinomianism unmasked.

To fill the pious reader with a just detestation of this doctrine, I need only unfold it thus: If the *continuance of indwelling sin* magnifies God’s sovereign grace, and patience, in saving *ungrateful* sinners; the *continuance of outward sin* will do this much more; for, the greater our outward sins are, the greater will God’s *patience* appear in bearing with us; and his *grace* in forgiving us; seeing “*he fainteth not, neither is he weary*.” Thus we are come almost up to the top of Antinomianism; and, to reach the highest step of the fatal ladder, we need only declare, as the author of the *Five Letters*, has done, that a *grievous fall* [into sin, such as adultery, robbery, murder, and incest,] will make us sing louder to the praise of restoring grace throughout all the ages of eternity. [See the fourth of those letters.] Now if a *grievous fall* will infallibly have that happy effect, it follows that ten such falls will multiply ten times the display of God’s power and patience.

What a boundless field opens here to run an Antinomian race, and to enlarge our wickedness as hell! What a ladder is here lent us to descend to the depth of the abomination of desolation, in order to reach the loudest notes of praise in heaven! If this Solifidian Gospel be not one of *the depths of Satan*, and the greatest too, I am not capable of discerning midnight gloom from noonday brightness.

ARG. V. (page 4.) "To save the guilty in such a manner as, &c. effectually to humble them who are saved, displays the manifold wisdom of God.—Does it not seem necessary to attain that great end, to make believers experimentally know what an evil and bitter thing sin is, &c. If so, when can the objects of salvation see this with becoming shame and sorrow? Not while they are *in the gall of bitterness*, &c. for in that state, *so abominable is man that he drinketh in iniquity like water*.—On the other hand, this cannot be after they are brought to glory. For then all the painful and shameful memorials of sin will be finally removed.—It must be while flesh and spirit dwell in the same man."

Granted; but what has this argument to do with the question? Did we ever deny, that, as long as we live, we must repent, or be deeply conscious *what an evil and bitter thing sin is*? The question is, whether *indwelling sin* is the cause or source of true repentance, or an incentive to it; and whether God has appointed that this should remain in our hearts till death, lest we should forget "*what an evil and bitter thing sin is*," or lest we should not remember it "*with becoming shame and sorrow*?" The absurdity of this plea has already been exposed in Sect. III. OBJ. viii. ix. And, to the arguments there advanced, I now add those which follow.—1. Does not experience convince imperfect believers, that the more fretfulness, self-will and obstinacy they have in their hearts, the less they do repent? How absurd is it then to suppose that the remains of these evil dispositions will help them to feel "*becoming shame and sorrow*" for sin!—2. Do not our opponents tell their hearers, that we get more becoming shame and sorrow by *looking one moment at him whom we have pierced*, than by poring upon our corruptions for an hour? If so, why will they plead for *indwelling sin*, that "*becoming sin and sorrow*" may abound? And why do they pretend that they exalt Christ more than we, who maintain that our most *becoming shame and deepest sorrow* flow from his ignominy and sufferings, and not from our *indwelling sin and conflicting corruptions*?—Did not Job *abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes*, when he saw his redeeming God by faith, much more than when he just kept his head above the bitter waters of impatience and murmuring?—3. The pleaders for the continuance of *indwelling sin* tell us, "That, as the

fight and attacks of a living and roaring lion, will make us dread lions more than all the descriptions and pictures which represent their destructive fierceness ; so the feeling the onsets of *indwelling sin*, will make us abhor sin more than all the descriptions of its odious nature, and the accounts of its fearful consequences : because a burnt child naturally dreads the fire.”—To this we answer : a burnt child who pleads for the keeping of a burning coal upon his breast to make him dread the fire, has hitherto been burned to little purpose.—Who had ever less to do with *indwelling sin*, and its cursed attacks, than the holy Jesus, and faithful angels ? And yet who is more filled with a perfect abhorrence of all iniquity ? On the other hand, who has been more distracted, and longer torn by *indwelling sin*, than the devil ? and who, nevertheless, is better reconciled to it ? Or who is more plagued by the continual rendings and bitings of the lions and vipers *within*, than those passionate, revengeful people, who say with all the positiveness of *Jonah* and *Absalom*, *I do well to be angry*, and *Revenge is sweet* ? Experience therefore demonstrates the inconclusiveness of this argument.—4. If the penitent thief properly learned in a few hours, *what an evil and bitter thing external and internal sin is* ; is it not absurd to suppose, that he must have continued forty years full of *indwelling sin* to learn that lesson, if God had added forty years to his life ? Would this delay have been to the honour of his Divine Teacher ?—Lastly, when Christ cast seven devils out of *Mary Magdalen*, did he leave one or two devils behind, to teach her “ *becoming shame and sorrow*” for sin ? And was it these two remaining “ *Diabolonians*,” that made her dissolve in tears at Christ’s feet ; or the grateful penitential love which she felt for her gracious Deliverer ?—Is it not astonishing, that *Gospel ministers* should so far forget themselves and their Saviour, as to teach, as openly as for decency they dare, that we must fetch our tears of godly sorrow from the infernal lake, and rekindle the candle of repentance at the fire of hell ! And that the fanning breath of the Spirit, and the golden, hallowed snuffers of the sanctuary cannot make that candle burn continually clear, unless we use to the end of our life, the black finger of Satan, *indwelling sin*, and Adam’s accursed extinguisher, *original corruption* ?

ARG. VI. Our author’s next argument in favour of the *necessary* *indwelling* of sin during life is more decent, and consequently more dangerous. The cloven feet of error delicately wear the sandals of truth : but with a little attention we shall soon see that they are only borrowed or stolen. The argument abridged from page 44. and rendered more perspicuous, may run thus :—“ If we have frequently been slothful, and have not at all times exerted our abilities to the

uttermost ; why may not God in wisdom rebuke us for it, and make us sensible of that evil, by not permitting us to effect what at other times, we seem determined, if possible, to accomplish ?" [that is, by not permitting us utterly to abolish the whole body of sin.]—"If Samson abuse his strength, it is fit he should have cause severely to repent of his folly by being deprived of it for a season, and becoming as weak as other men." Here we are left to infer, that as Samson through his unfaithfulness became *as weak as other men* for a season ; so all believers, on account of their unfaithfulness, must be weakened by indwelling sin, during the term of life.

To this we answer, 1. That although believers frequently give place to *sloth* and *unfaithfulness*, yet they are no more *necessitated* to do it, than Samson was to dally with *Delilah*.—2. If the constant indwelling of sin be a just punishment for not making a proper use of the talent of grace which God gives us, it evidently follows, that *our unfaithfulness*, and not a *necessity appointed by God*, is the very worm which destroys our evangelically sinless perfection : and the moment our opponents grant this, they allow all that we contend for ; unless they should be able to prove, that God *necessitates* us to be *unfaithful*, in order to *punish* us infallibly with indwelling sin for life.

As for Samson, he is most unfortunately brought in to support the doctrine of the *necessary* indwelling of that *weakening* sin, which we call *inbred corruption* : and he might be most happily produced to encourage those *unfaithful* believers, who, like him, have not made a proper use of their strength in time past : for he outlived his penal weakness, and recovered the strength of a perfect Nazarite before death ; witness his last achievement, which exceeded all his former exploits. For it would be highly absurd to suppose that he got in a *death purgatory* the amazing strength by which he pulled down the pillars that supported the large building where the Philistines feasted. Nor need I the strength of a logical Samson, to break the argumentative reeds which support the temple of error, in which the imperfectionists make sport, to their hurt, with the doctrine of that Christian Samson, who said, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*.

ARG. VII. (page 47.) &c. We are indirectly told [for pious men can utter gross Antinomianism without the mask of circumlocution] that indwelling sin must continue in us, that "*grace* (may) not only be exercised, but distinguished from all that has only the appearance of it. But—how is the true grace of God to be here distinguished from that which is but the semblance of it ?—By its effects—■ clear and spiritual discovery of the depravity, deceit, and desperate

wickedness of our own hearts.”—And then we are given to understand, that lest we should not be *deeply convinced* of that *desperate wickedness*, the *continuance* of indwelling sin is absolutely necessary. This argument runs into the fifth, which I have already answered. It is another *indirect* plea for the continuance of *outward adultery* and *murder*, as well as for the continuance of *indwelling sin*; it being certain that outward adultery, &c. will *convince us of the desperate wickedness of our hearts*, still more powerfully than heart adultery, &c. To what hard shifts are good men put, when they fight for the continuance of the bud or root of any sin? Their every stroke for sin is a stab at the very vitals of godliness.

ARG. VIII. (page 48.) The continuance of indwelling sin, which is (with great modesty in the ingenious author, and therefore with great danger to the unwary reader) called “*this warfare*,” is supported by the following reason. “It is often an *occasion* to discover the strength of grace received, as well as the truth of it.” This argument is all of a piece with the preceding, and puts me in mind of a speech which a shameless young debauchee made once to me. I kept (said he) drinking and dosing in such a tavern, without ever going to bed, or ever being sober one hour for twenty-three days. I never had so remarkable an *occasion* to discover the *strength* of my body, and the excellence of my constitution.” However, in a few months, while he continued in the *conclusion* to discover his strength, a mortal disorder seized upon him, and by removing him into eternity, taught me, that if *Fulsome* the professor, speaks the truth, when he says, *Once in grace always in grace*; *Nabal*, the sot, was mistaken, when he hinted, *Once in health always in health*. To make the Imperfectionists ashamed of this argument, I hope I need only observe:—1. That nothing ever showed more the strength of grace than the conflicts which the man Christ Jesus went through, though he never conflicted a moment with *indwelling sin*.—2. That the strength and excellence of a remedy is much better discovered by the removal of the disorder which it is designed to cure, than by the *conflicts* which the poor patient has with pain, till death comes to terminate his misery.—And 3. that the argument I refute indirectly represents Christ as a physician, who keeps his patients upon the rack to render himself more necessary to them, and to show the strength of the anodyne mixture, by which he gives them, now and then, a little ease under their *continued, racking pain*!

Our author adds, page 49. “*If those who bear the heaviest burdens, are sometimes esteemed the strongest men, they who are thus engaged in this warfare*” (I wish he would speak quite out, and say, They who

bear the heaviest burden of indwelling sin) “*have that evidence of the strength of grace, &c. which is peculiar to themselves.*” A great mistake this : for if we may believe Ovid, when Medea murdered her own child, under a severe conflict with indwelling sin, she had that fatal evidence of what is here preposterously called the strength of grace ; but what I beg leave to call *the obstinacy of free will.* Sed trahit invitam nova vis, &c. “*Passion, (said she,) hurries away my unwilling, reluctant mind.*” Judas, it seems, was not an utter stranger to this conflict (any more than to the burden of guilt,) when he hurried out of it into a death purgatory. Nor do I blame him for having chosen strangling rather than life, if death can terminate the misery which accompanies indwelling sin, and do more in that respect for fallen believers than Christ himself ever did. But, supposing that the saving grace of God, which has appeared to all men, never appeared to Medea and Judas ;—supposing these two sinful souls never conflicted with indwelling sin, it will however follow from our author’s insinuation, that in case David had defiled half a dozen married women, and killed their husbands, to enjoy them without a rival, we should esteem him six times stronger in grace, if he had not fainted under his six-fold burden, like Judas ; because “*in this [Antinomian] warfare, those who bear the heaviest burdens are esteemed the strongest*” believers : and because “*they have that testimony of their love to Christ, which is peculiar to themselves.*” If Satan were to transform himself into an angel of light, could he preach a more dangerous and immoral Gospel to an Antinomian and perverse generation ?

ARG. IX.—Our author’s last argument in favour of the necessary continuance of sin in us, occurs page 51. and runs thus :—“*I will only add, that by this warfare, the Lord weans his people from the present evil world, and makes them long for the land of promise, as the land of rest, &c. I know some will say, This is impossible : and be ready to ask, Are we then debtors to the flesh?*”—(A very proper question ! which the author answers thus :) “*By no means, &c. In our flesh dwells no good thing, &c. &c. Nevertheless—he [God] can and does make the presence of evil so irksome to the believer, that it makes him ardently long for complete deliverance from it.*”—That is, in plain English, he keeps his patients so long upon the rack of their indwelling sin, that at last they are forced to long for death, the great cleanser from heart iniquity. This argument would have been complete, if it had been supported by these two passages, *I do well to be angry even unto death :—in those days, men, [plagued by the locusts which ascend out of the bottomless pit]*

shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. To show its absurdity I need only make two or three remarks upon it.

1. Mark the inconsistency of our opponents. When they hear us press *obedient faith* upon a fallen or wavering believer, by mentioning to him the *terrors* of the Lord, the *fear* of losing the divine favour, and the *danger* of being even *spewed out of Christ's mouth*, and *condemned without mercy* if he show no mercy; they say that enforcing the *love of Christ* on a disobedient believer will abundantly answer all the good ends which we propose by thus preaching Christ's law: but, when they plead for the *continuance* of sin, they forget their own doctrine, and tell us that *indwelling sin* is necessary to keep us in the way of duty, namely, in an ardent longing for heaven. They blame us for making use of *Christ's law* to spur believers, and yet they, (see to what astonishing height their partiality is grown!) *they* do not blush to preach openly the *law of sin* to believers: insisting that its working in their members is necessary to "make them long for the land of promise, as for the land of rest, and for the speedy possession of that great good which God has laid up for them:" Page 52.—We are heretics for preaching the law of Christ, the law of liberty! they who preach the law of sin, the law of bondage, are orthodox, and engross to themselves the glorious title of Gospel ministers!

2. How absurd is it to prop up the throne of *indwelling sin* in the hearts of believers, that its tyrannical law may make them *long for heaven*! Did not Christ long for heaven without *indwelling sin*? Do not the holiest believers, who are most free from *indwelling sin*, long most for the beatific vision? And do we not see that fallen believers, who are most filled with *indwelling sin*, are most apt to be *lovers of sin and the world, more than lovers of God and heaven*? Are they not the very people, who, unmindful of Lot's wife, stay in the plain, instead of escaping for their life, and fleeing to the celestial mount of God, without ever looking behind them?

3. Is not *indwelling sin* a clog, rather than a spur, to the heavenly racers? If sin be of such service to us, to make us run the career of holy longing after heavenly rest, why does the apostle exhort us to *set aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us*? If we want a spur to make us mend our pace, need we keep the spur, *indwelling sin*?—Is it not more likely to spur us to hell than to heaven? If we have thousands of sinless spurs, what need have we of keeping that to drive us to heaven, which drove Adam behind the trees of the garden; not to say, out of his native paradise?

If you ask, What are the *sinless* spurs of believers? We reply, all the toils, infirmities, and pains of our weary, decaying, mortal bodies:

—All the troubles, disappointments, and sorrows, which arise as naturally out of our present circumstances, as sparks do out of the fire :—A share of the dreadful temptations which harassed Christ in the wilderness : and frequent tastes of the bitter cup which made him sweat blood in the garden, and cry out on Calvary.—Hear one, to whom our opponents absurdly give the spur of *indwelling sin*, as if he had not spurring enough without it : *I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh* ; Col. i. 24. And surely *indwelling sin* was never one of Christ's afflictions.—Again, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall it be tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long : we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*—Once more : some were tortured, not accepting deliverance, and others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheepskins, and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

I grant that all true believers have not these thorns in the flesh, and feel not the spurs which made Elijah flee for his life before incensed Jezebel, and request that he might die under the juniper-tree ; but, at the best of times, they have, or should have, David's affliction, *My eyes run down with water because men keep not thy law* :—They have, or should have, Jeremiah's grief, *O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the desolation of Jerusalem, or for the slain of the daughter of God's people !*—They have, or should have, the sorrow of just Lot, who was vexed from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked among whom he dwelt. To suppose, therefore, that in this vale of tears, tribulation, and *sin*, we need keep the sting of *indwelling sin*, because we must strive against the *sin* which is in the world to the end, even unto blood, if we are called to secure the crown of martyrdom ;—or because it “ *is the will of God, that through much tribulation we should enter the kingdom ;*” [page 46,] and because we should long for heaven : to suppose, I say, that we must keep the sting, *indwelling sin*, on these accounts, is as absurd as to suppose, that all the keepers and nurses in *Bedlam* must be mad, and must continue to be plagued with personal lunacy, lest they should not strive against madness to the end :—lest they should not come out of great disturbances when they remove from their dreary habitation ;—and lest, while they continue

there, they should not see mad people enough to make them *long for* the conversation of reasonable persons.

ARG. X. (page 52.) Our author closes his shrewd plea for the death purgatory, by proposing a very material objection: "If any exclaim and say, These sentiments have a tendency to reconcile believers to sin: I must say,—The flesh might as soon be reconciled to the spirit, as the spirit to the flesh; or sin to grace, as grace to sin. It is often said, That nature will be nature. And why may not this be applied to the divine nature—of which believers are said to be partakers?" Hence our author insinuates, that the divine nature of believers is "*immutable*;" and that, because *to will is present with them*, when they sin they still retain God's holiness, as "*lions and eagles, however confined or caressed, retain their ferocity and brutal appetites*."

I am glad to see that this pious author has still the cause of holiness at heart, and desires to stop up the Antinomian gap. I am persuaded that he *intends* to do God service by pleading for the continuance of *indwelling sin*. If he ask for the reprieve of that robber and murderer, it is merely because Antinomianism has deceived him, as formerly Pharisaism deceived the Jews who cried, *Release unto us Barabbas*. If he saw, that *Christ in us* must be crucified afresh, in case the *robber in us* is not put to death; I doubt not he would be as sorry for his publication, as the devout Jews were for their anti-christian request, when they were *pricked to the heart* on the day of pentecost.

But alas! if a good intention excuse bad performances, it does not stop their mischief. The very desire which our author evidences to secure godliness is so unfortunately expressed, that it gives her as fatal a blow as the tempter did, when he said to our first parents, *Ye shall not surely die*. For, when that gentleman intimates to fallen believers, *Ye are possessed of the divine nature*; and, be your works what they will, if *to will be "in some degree present,"* (page 54.) ye are as much possessed of God's holy image, as a lion is possessed of a lion's fierce nature: what is this, but to preach the very Gospel which the serpent preached in paradise; with this difference, that the serpent said, *Ye shall not die: Ye shall be as gods*: but the imperfectionists say, Your salvation is finished; ye have already the "*immutable nature*" of God: *Ye are already as gods?*—Adam believed the tempter, and lost his holy nature. The Imperfectionists believe our author. Oh! may none of them remain "*immutable*" in the *sinful* imperfection which he so earnestly contends for.

XI. A Caveat. Having said so much upon our author's mistakes, I should be inexcusable if I did not drop a *caution* about the veil with which they are covered. His book goes into the world under the harmless title of "*The Christian's peculiar Conflict*;" whereas it should be called, *A Plea for the propriety and usefulness of the continuance of indwelling sin in all Christians*. This plain, artless title, would have made true Christians stand upon their guard; but now they take up *without suspicion* the cup mixed by the author: and it is well if some have not already drank it to the dregs, *without fear*.

An illustration will give the reader an idea of the wisdom with which the title of the Essay is contrived.—I write a treatise full upon the advantage of a standing rebellion in the kingdom, and urge a variety of plausible arguments to show the great good that will arise from an inveterate opposition to the government. "If a spirit of rebellion ceases in any subject, the king's patience, mercy, love, and power will not be so fully displayed, nor will the loyalty of his good subjects be so well distinguished and proved:—Rebellion, and the burdens that attend it, will make us long for peace:—Guilty, ungrateful rebels will love the king and admire his mercy the more when they are forgiven after their manifold rebellions. And therefore [to use the unguarded words of our author, page 53,] *it becomes us seriously to consider how far this great end [of a spirit of rebellion continually dwelling in every Briton's breast] is understood, approved, and answered.*"—I show my manuscript to a friend, who says; Your Essay will alarm every well-wisher to the constitution of the realm. But I remove his objection by saying, I will not call it "An Essay on the propriety and usefulness of a spirit of rebellion constantly harboured in the breast of every one of his Majesty's subjects:" but I will call it, "*The Loyal Subject's peculiar Conflict, An Essay on 1 Sam. xii. 19.*" and this plausible title will modestly make way for my boldest arguments. Pleas for the continuance of rebellion and *indwelling sin*, may properly enough be introduced by such a stratagem.

SECTION XV.

Mr. Hill objects that the Doctrine of Christian Perfection is POPISH ; and the Author shows, that it is truly Evangelical, and stands inseparably connected with the cordial Obedience required by the mediatorial Laws of Moses and Christ ; insomuch that there is absolutely no medium between the Doctrine of an evangelically sinless Perfection, and lawless Antinomianism.—This Section contains a Recapitulation of the Scripture proofs of the Doctrine maintained in these Sheets ; and therefore the careful perusal of it is humbly recommended to the Reader.

HAVING taken my leave of the ingenious Author of *The Christian's peculiar Conflict*, I return to Mr. Hill, who by this time meets me with his *Review* in his hand, and with that theological sling, casts at our doctrine a stone which has indeed frightened thousands of weak souls, but has never done any execution amongst the judicious. Your doctrine, says he, “*is a Popish Doctrine ;*” and he might have added, with as much reason, that it is a *Pelagian* doctrine too : for, bold as *Pelagius* and some *Popes* have been in coining new doctrines, they never came to such a pitch of boldness, as to say that they were the authors of the doctrine of evangelical obedience, and of those commandments, which bind us to love God—our covenant God, with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves : precious Gospel commandments these, upon which the doctrine of perfection securely rests !

What *Pope* was ever silly enough to pretend that he wrote the book of Deuteronomy, where we find this sweet evangelical law, *Hear, O Israel : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart—*[to do them I suppose, and not to ridicule them under the names of *perfection* and *Popery* ?] Deut. vi. 5, 6. Now by what argument will Mr. Hill prove that the *Pope* is the inventor of this blessed doctrine ?

Should that gentleman reply, that when God gave his ancient people this gracious law of perfection, he did not give it with an intention that they should *personally* keep it as an evangelical law ; but only with an intention to drive them to the promised Messiah, who was to keep it for them, and to give eternal indulgences to all the believers who break it ; we demand a proof ; and till Mr. Hill produce it, we show his mistake by the following arguments. 1. Although

the *Jewish* dispensation revealed a gracious God, abundant in goodness, mercy, and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, to returning sinners, who penitentially laid hold on his *Jewish* covenant; yet, if I remember right, it never promised to accept of an obedience performed by another. Hence it is, that God never commanded that *Jewish females* should be circumcised; but confined his ordinance to the *males*, who alone could *personally* obey it. We frequently read of vicarious *sufferings* in the *Jewish* Gospel, but not of vicarious *obedience*, and vicarious *love*. For although the obedience of godly parents engaged God to bestow many blessings upon their children; yet the children were to obey for themselves, or to be cut off in the end. The Jews were undone by a conceit of the contrary doctrine, and by wild notions about the obedience of Abraham, and the holiness of the temple which they fancied was imputed to them in the Calvinian way: and a similar mistake, it is to be feared, still undoes multitudes of Christians, who fatally mistake the nature of Christian obedience, absurdly put on robes of self-imputed righteousness, and rashly bespatter the robes of personal, and evangelically perfect obedience, which God requires of every one of us.

2. The mistake I expose would never have been made by our opponents, if they had not used themselves to tear the evangelically legal part of the Scriptures from the context, in order to give it a sense contrary to that of the Sacred Writers; it being certain that when you have torn a man's tongue out of his mouth, you may afterward force it down his throat, and leave it there with the root against his teeth and the tip towards his stomach. To show that the precept of *perfect love*, which I have quoted from Deut. vi. is treated in this manner, as often as our opponents insinuate, God did not intend, that *Jewish* believers should personally observe it as a term of final acceptance, but only that they should be driven thereby to the Mediator, who should perfectly love God for them:—To show, I say, the absurdity of this notion, we need only do Moses the justice to hear him out. Let any unprejudiced person read the whole chapter, and he will, I am persuaded, side against the Calvinian imputation of a *Jewish* perfection to *Jewish* believers. Moses begins by saying, *Now these are the commandments—which the Lord your God [yours through an evangelical covenant] commanded to teach you, that ye might do them*, [and not that your Mediator might do them for you] Deut. vi. 1. Two verses after he adds, *Hear, O Israel, and observe and do*, [Not hear, O Israel, and another shall observe and do for thee,] *that it may be well with thee*. Then comes our capital doctrine and precept of perfect love, which a few verses below, Moses continues to enforce

thus: *Ye shall not tempt the Lord your [covenant] God.—You shall diligently keep the [evangelical] commands of the Lord your [covenant] God; and his [Gospel] testimonies, which he has commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord thy God, that it may be well with thee.—And when thy son asketh thee, saying, What do mean these statutes [of perfect love, &c.] Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out.—And, lest Antinomian hands should draw the golden nail of this perfect obedience for want of proper clenching; this precious chapter, which our Church has properly selected for a Sunday lesson, ends with these words, which must raise a blush on the face, or strike conviction into the breast, of all who trample under foot the robes of our own evangelical perfection; And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes,—that he might preserve us alive: and it shall be our righteousness [our Gospel perfection] if we observe to do all these commandments, before the Lord our [covenant] God, as he has commanded us, Deut. vi. 1—25.*

If our opponents say, that this is a transcript of Adam's anti-mediatorial law of paradisiacal perfection; and not a copy of Moses's mediatorial law of Jewish perfection: or if they assert that Moses Calvinistically hints that the Jews were to keep this law by proxy, they may say that light is darkness. And if they grant that Moses was no Antinomian shuffler, but really meant what he spoke and wrote, it unavoidably follows:—1. That God really required of every Jew an evangelical and personal perfection of love according to the degree of light and power imparted under the Jewish dispensation. 2. That this evangelical Jewish perfection of love was attainable by every sincere Jew; because whatever God requires of us in a covenant of grace, he graciously engages himself to help us to perform, if we believingly and obediently embrace his promised assistance.—And 3. That if an evangelical perfection of love was attainable under the Jewish Gospel [for the Gospel was preached to the Jews, as well as to us, although not so clearly. Heb. iv. 2.] it is absurd to deny that the Gospel of Christ requires less perfection, or makes less provision, that Christians may attain what their dispensation calls them to.

If Mr. Hill think that this inference is not just, I refer him to our Lord's declaration: *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*: first, by perfectly obeying myself the two great moral precepts of Moses and the prophets; and next by teaching and helping all my faithful disciples to do the same, Matt. v. 17. Should that gentleman object to the latter part of this little comment, because it leaves no room for the Calvinian impu-

tation of Christ's mediatorial perfection to fallen believers, who sleep in impenitency, under the guilt of adultery, covered by murder: we reply, that this part of our exposition, far from being forced, is highly agreeable to the text, when it is taken in connexion with the scope of our Lord's sermon and with the context. For,

1. All Christ's sermons, and especially that upon the Mount, inculcate the doctrine of *personal* perfection, and not the doctrine of *imputed* perfection. 2. The very chapter out of which this text is taken, ends with these words, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.* And Mr. Hill, prejudiced as he is against our doctrine, is too candid to assert, that our Lord meant, "*Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect* :—Now he is perfect only by the Calvinian imputation of *my* righteousness: it is merely by imputation that *he* makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. And he sendeth only a Calvinistically imputed rain upon the just and upon the unjust. *Be ye therefore perfect only by the imputation of my perfect righteousness.*"

Mr. Hill's mistake has not only no countenance from the distant part of the context, but it is flatly contrary to the words which immediately follow the controverted text. *For verily I say unto you, [that, far from being come to destroy the law and the prophets, that is, the spirituality and strictness of the moral part of the Jewish Gospel] till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, [which Pharisaic glosses have unnerved] till all be fulfilled.* And lest you should think that I speak of your fulfilling this law by proxy and imputation, I add, *Whosoever shall break one of these commandments, [which I am going to enforce upon you, as my own mediatorial law; though hitherto you have considered them only as Moses's mediatorial law] whosoever, I say, shall break one of these least commandments, and [by precept and example] teach men so: he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: [If he have any place among my people in my spiritual kingdom, it shall be only among my carnal babes, who are the least of my subjects.] But whosoever shall do and teach them [the commandments whose spirituality I am going to assert] the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, [he shall be an adult, perfect Christian in the kingdom of my grace here; and he shall receive a proportionable crown of righteousness in the kingdom of my glory hereafter.]* Matt. v. 18, 19.

If I am not mistaken it evidently follows from these plain words of Christ; 1. That he taught a *personal* perfection, and an *evangelically sinless* perfection too:—2. That this perfection consists in not breaking, by wilful omission, the *least* of the commandments which our

Lord rescued both from the false glosses of Antinomian Pharisees, who rested on the imputed righteousness of Abraham, saying "*We have Abraham for our father : we are the children of Abraham : we are perfect in Abraham ; all our perfection is in Abraham ;*" and from the no less false glosses of those absurdly-legal Pharisees, who paid the tithe of anise, mint, and cummin, with the greatest scrupulosity, whilst they secretly neglected mercy, truth, and the love of God.—And 3. That the perfection which Christ enforced upon his disciples was not merely of the negative kind, but of the positive also : since it consisted both in *doing* and in *teaching the least*, as well as the *greatest* of God's commandments.

If you ask what are the *greatest* of these commandments, which Christ says his disciples must "*do and teach,*" if they will be *great*, or perfect in his kingdom and dispensation, St. Matthew answers, *One of the Pharisees, who was a lawyer, asked him a question, saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law,* [the name then given to the Jewish Gospel which Moses preached ;] *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind : that is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it [in nature and importance,] Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matt. xxii. 35.* That is, Whatever Moses and the other prophets taught and promised, hangs on the nail of perfect love. All came from, all tended to, perfect love, under the Jewish dispensation : nor is my dispensation less holy and gracious. On the contrary, *What the law could not do*, in a manner sufficiently perfect for my dispensation (for Jewish perfection is not the highest perfection at which man may arrive on earth) *God sending me into the world for the atonement and destruction of sin, has hereby abundantly condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the mediatorial law, which enjoins perfect love, might be abundantly fulfilled in the hearts of them that walk after the spirit of my Gospel ;—a brighter Gospel this, which transmits more direct and warmer beams from the Sun of Righteousness, and can raise the exquisitely delicious fruit of perfect love to a greater perfection than the Gospel which Moses preached. [Compare Rom. viii. 3. with Heb. iv. 2. See also an account of the superiority of Christ's Gospel in the Scripture Scales, Vol. III. Sect. VI.]*

Agreeably to this doctrine of perfection our Lord said to the rich young man, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments :—If thou wilt be perfect—follow me in the way of my commandments : Love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself ; for blessed are they*

that do his commandments, that they may enter through the gates into the city, and have right to the tree of life which is in the street of that city, on either side of the pure river of the water of life. This do and thou shalt live eternally in heaven. Bring forth fruit unto perfection, according to the talents of grace and power which thou art entrusted with, and thou shalt inherit eternal life:—thou shalt receive the reward of the inheritance:—thou shalt receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him, with the love which keepeth the commandments, and fulfilleth the royal law. Compare Matt. xix. 17. Luke x. 28. Rev. xxii. 2, 14. James i. 12. and Luke viii. 14.

On these, and the above-mentioned Scriptures, we rest the truth and importance of the doctrine of perfection. Jewish perfection principally stands or falls with Deut. vi. and Matt. xxii. and Christian perfection, with Matt. v. and xix. to which you may add the joint testimony of St. Paul and St. James. The former, whom our opponents absurdly make the captain of their imperfection, says to the judaizing Galatians, *Bear ye one another's burdens* [a rare instance of perfect love!] *and so fulfil the [mediatorial] law of Christ*, Gal. vi. 2. — Nor let Mr. Hill say, that the apostle means we should fulfil it by proxy; for St. Paul adds in the next verse but one, *Let every man prove his own work, and then [with respect to that work] he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another, for [with regard to personal, evangelical obedience] every man shall bear his own burthen*:—a proverbial expression, which answers to this Gospel axiom, Every man shall be judged according to his own works.

St. Paul urges the same evangelical and lawful doctrine upon the Romans. *Love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery:—Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love is the fulfilling of the law*, Rom. xiii. 8, &c. And that St. Paul spake this of the mediatorial law of liberty and Christian perfection, and not of the Christless law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection, is evident from his calling it *the law of Christ*, that is, *Our Redeemer's law*, in opposition to our *Creator's law*, which was given without an atoning sacrifice and a mediating priest, and therefore made no allowance for infirmities, and admitted neither of repentance nor of renovated obedience. Besides, St. Paul was not such a novice as not to know that the Galatians and the Romans, who *had all sinned*, as he observes, Rom. iii. 23. could never be exhorted, by any man in his senses, to fulfil the paradisiacal law of innocence, by now loving one another. He therefore indubitably spake of the gracious law of our gentle

Melchisedec ; the law of him who said, *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another—as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*, John xiii. 34.—A precious commandment this, which our Lord calls *new*, not because the Jewish mediator had not given it to the Israelites, but because the Christian mediator enforced it by *new* motives, gave *new*, unparalleled instances of obedience to it, annexed *new* rewards to the keeping of it, and required it to be fulfilled with a *new* perfection : and that Christians shall be eternally saved or damned, according to their keeping or breaking this mediatorial law of Christian perfection, this *law of Christ*, this *royal law of Jesus the King of the Jews*, we prove by Matthew xviii. 35. vii. 26. xxv. 45. and Luke vi. 46, &c.

If Mr. Hill's prejudices are not removed by what St. Paul says in Rom. xiii. concerning our *fulfilling* the Gospel law of perfection ; we entreat him to ponder the glorious testimony which the apostle, in Rom. ii. bears to this law, which he does not scruple to call *his Gospel*. With regard to this gracious rule of judgment, says he, *There is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without a [mediator's written] law, shall also perish without a [mediator's written] law : and as many as have sinned in [or under a mediator's written] law, shall be judged by the [mediator's written] law. For not the hearers of the [mediator's] law, are just before God, but the doers of the [mediator's] law shall be justified. [Nor are the heathens totally destitute of this law :] for when the Gentiles, which have not the [mediator's written] law, do by nature [by natural conscience, which is the echo of the mediator's voice, and the reflection of the light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world] when the Gentiles, I say, do [by these means] the things contained in the law : they having not the law are a law unto themselves ; their conscience also bearing witness ; and their thoughts [in consequence of the witness borne] accusing, or else excusing one another ; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel, [that is, according to the Gospel law which I preach.] Rom. ii. 11, &c.—For, while some lay up treasures in heaven, others treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds : to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, [or in keeping the mediator's law according to their dispensation,] seek for glory [he will render] eternal life, [like a righteous judge, and gracious rewarder of them that diligently seek him.] But unto them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [he will render] indignation and wrath [in just proportion to the more or less bright discoveries of the truth*

which shall have been made to them] Rom. ii. 5, &c.—*For that servant who knew his Lord's will, [by a written law, delivered through the hands of a mediator] and prepared not himself [that he might have boldness in the day of judgment] neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes [in the hell of unbelieving Jews and disobedient Christians.] But he that knew not [his master's will, by an outwardly written law,] and did [break the law of nature, disobey the voice of his conscience, and [commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, Luke xii. 47, 48. An indubitable proof this, that as something is required of all : something, even a talent of grace, a measure of the spiritual light which enlightens every man, is given to all to improve with, and bring forth fruit to perfection : some thirty fold, some sixty fold, and others an hundred fold, according to their respective dispensations.*

From these quotations it appears to us indubitable, that the Gospel of St. Paul, and of consequence, the Gospel of Christ, is not a wanton, lawless Gospel ; but a holy, lawful Gospel, in which evangelical promises are properly guarded by evangelical rules of judgment, and the doctrines of *grace* wisely connected with the doctrines of *justice*. If this be a glaring truth, what a dangerous game do many good men play, when they emasculate St. Paul's Gospel, and with antinomian rashness, cut off and cast away that morally legal part of it, which distinguishes it both from the *ceremonial Gospel*, which the Galatians foolishly embraced ; and from the *lawless Gospel*, which Solifidian gossellers contend for, under the perverted name of *free grace* ! And how seriously should we all consider these awful words of St. Paul ! *There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ ; but though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you [whether it be a more severe, judaizing Gospel,—or a less strict Solifidianizing Gospel] than that which we have preached unto you [which stands at an equal distance from burthensome Jewish ceremonies ; and from lawless, Solifidian tenets ;] let him be accursed, Gal. i. 7, 8.*

This recapitulation of the principal Scripture proofs of our doctrine would be exceedingly deficient, if I did not once more remind the reader of the glorious testimony which St. James bears to the *law of liberty*. *If ye [believers, says he] fulfil the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well : [Ye quit yourselves like perfect Christians.] But if ye have [uncharitably] respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors : [that is, ye are condemned by the mediator's*

law, under which ye are. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law [of the mediator ;] and yet [uncharitably] offend in one point, he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye, therefore, and so do, as people that shall be judged by the law of liberty [the mediator's law.] For he [the imperfect, uncharitable, fallen believer] shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no [charity or] mercy.* James ii. 8.

We rest our doctrine of Jewish and Christian perfection on these consentaneous testimonies of *St. James* and *St. Paul* ; of *Moses*, the great lawgiver of the Jews ; and of *Christ*, the great lawgiver of the Christians : the doctrine of perfection, or of perfectly cordial obedience, being inseparably connected with the *mediatorial laws* of *Moses* and of *Christ*. The moment you destroy these laws, by turning them into “ rules of life,” through the personal observance of which no believer shall ever be justified or condemned, you destroy the ground of Jewish and Christian perfection, and you impose upon us the lawless, unscriptural tenet of an obedience performed by proxy, and of an imputed perfection, which will do us as little good in life, death, and judgment, as imputed health, opposed to inherent health, will do to a poor, sickly, dying criminal. Thus, after leading my reader round a large circle of proofs, I return to the very point whence I started : [*See the beginning of the preface :*] And I conclude, that a Gospel without a mediatorial law, without an evangelical law, without the *conditional* promise of a crown of heavenly glory to the obedient, and without the *conditional* threatening of infernal stripes to the disobedient ;—I conclude, I say, that such a Gospel will always lead us to the centre of Antinomianism ;—to the *Diana* and *Hecate* of the Calvinists ; to *lawless free grace* and *everlasting free wrath* ; or, if you please, *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*. On the other hand, the moment you admit what the Jewish and Christian Gospel covenants are so express about, I mean an *evangelical law*, or a *practicable rule of judgment*, as well as of conduct, eternal salvation and eternal damnation become *conditional* : they are suspended upon the evangelical perfection or imperfection of our obedience : and the Rev. Mr. Berridge hits on the head the golden nail, on which hangs all the law and the prophets, all the four Gospels and the Epistles, when he says, “ *Sincere obedience as a condition will lead you unavoidably up to a perfect obedience.*”

And now, reader, choose which thou wilt follow, Mr. Hill's lawless Antinomian Gospel, or St. Paul and St. James's Gospel, including the evangelical law of Christian liberty and perfection, by which law thou shalt be *conditionally* justified or condemned, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel, Rom. ii. 16. If

thou choose imputed righteousness and imputed perfection without any condition, it will “*unavoidably*” lead thee down into a death purgatory, through the chambers of indwelling sin, if thou art an *elect* person in the Calvinian sense of the word; or to eternal damnation through the chambers of *necessary* sin, if thou art one of those whom our opponents call *reprobates*. But if thou cordially choose the sincere, voluntary, evangelical obedience of faith, which we preach both as a condition and as a *privilege*; it will [Mr. Hill’s second being judge] “*unavoidably* lead thee up to perfect obedience.” There is absolutely no medium between these two Gospels. Thou must either be a *Crispian*, lawless imperfectionist, or an evangelical lawful perfectionist; unless thou choose to be a *Gallio*—one who cares for none of these things. Thou must wrap thyself up in unscriptural notions of imputed righteousness, imputed holiness, and imputed obedience, which make up the ideal garment of Calvinistically imputed perfection: or thou must perfectly wash in the blood of the Lamb thy robes of inherent, though derived righteousness, holiness and obedience, which [when they are thus washed] are the rich wedding garment of evangelical perfection.

SECTION XVI.

The Author shows that the distinction between sins, and [evangelically speaking] innocent infirmities, is truly scriptural, and that judicious Calvinists, and the Church of England hold it.—He draws the line between sins and innocent infirmities.—A view of the extremes into which rigid Pelagian Perfectionists, and rigid Calvinian Imperfectionists, have run east and west from the Gospel line, of an evangelical perfection.—An answer to Mr. Henry’s grand argument for the continuance of indwelling sin.—Conclusion of the argumentative part of this Essay.

WE have proved, in the preceding section, that the doctrine of an evangelically sinless perfection is truly scriptural; being inseparably connected with the greatest and most excellent precepts of the Old and New Testament, and with the most evangelical and awful sanctions of *Moses* and *Jesus Christ*. This might suffice to show, that our doctrine of perfection cannot be called *popish*, or *Pelagian*, with any more candour, than the doctrine of the Trinity can be branded with those epithets, because *Pelagius* and the *Pope* embrace it. If, in order to be good Protestants, we were obliged to renounce all that the Jews, Turks, and Infidels hold: we should renounce the Old Testament, because the Jews revere it: we should renounce the

unity of God, because the Mahometans contend for it : nay, we should renounce common humanity, because all Infidels approve of it. I beg leave, however, to dwell a moment longer upon Mr. Hill's objection, that the Pope holds our doctrine.

When this gentleman was at *Rome*, he may remember that his *Cicerone* showed him, in the ancient church of *St. Paul without the gate*, (if I remember the name right) the pictures of all the Popes, from *St. Peter, Linus, Cletus*, and *Clement*, down to the Pope, who then filled, what is called "*St. Peter's chair*." According to this view of papacy, Mr. Hill is certainly in the right ; for if he turn back to Sect. V. he will see that *Peter* the first Pope, so called, was a complete perfectionist, and if *Clemens*, or *St. Clement*, *Paul's* fellow labourer, was really the fourth Pope, it is certain that he also held our doctrine, as well as *Peter* and *Christ* ; for he wrote to the *Corinthians*, "*By love were all the elect of God made perfect.—Those who were made perfect in love are in the region of the just, and shall appear in glory.—Happy then are we, if we fulfil the commandments of God in the unity of love.—Following the commandments of God, they sin not.*" *St. Clem. Ep. to the Cor.* This glorious testimony, which *St. Clement* bears to the doctrine of perfection, might be supported by many correspondent quotations from the other Fathers. But as this would too much swell this Essay, I shall only produce one, which is so much the more remarkable, as it is taken from *St. Jerom's* third Dialogue against *Pelagius*, the rigid, overdoing perfectionist. "*Hoc et nos dicimus, posse hominem non peccare, si velit, pro tempore, pro loco, pro imbecillitate corporea, quamdiu intentus est animus, quamdiu chorda nulla vitio laxatur in cithara.*"—That is, *We* [who oppose *Pelagius's* notions about *Adamic* perfection] maintain also, that considering our time, place, and bodily weakness, we can avoid sin if we will ; as long as our mind is bent upon it, and the string of our harp [i. e. of our Christian resolution] is not slackened by any wilful fault.

When I read these blessed testimonies in favour of the truth which we vindicate, my pleased mind flies to *Rome*, and I am ready to say, Hail ! ye holy Popes and Fathers, ye perfect servants of my perfect Lord ! I am ambitious to share with you the names of "*Arminian, Pelagian, Papist, temporary monster, and Atheist in masquerade.*" I publish to the world my steady resolution to follow you, and any of your successors, who have done and taught *Christ's* commandments. And I enter my protest against the mistakes of the ministers, who teach that *Christ's* law is impracticable, that sin must dwell in our hearts as long as we live, and that we must continue to break the Lord's precepts in our inward parts unto death.

I shall close my answer to this argument of Mr. Hill, by a quotation from Mr. Wesley's *Remarks upon the Review*. "It [our doctrine of Christian perfection] has been condemned by the Pope and his whole conclave, even in this present century. In the famous bull *Unigenitus*, they utterly condemn the *uninterrupted act* [of faith and love which some men talked of, of continually rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks] as dreadful heresy."—If we have *Peter* and *Clement* on our side, we are willing to let Mr. Hill screen his doctrine behind the Pope who issued out the bull *Unigenitus*, and if he pleases, behind the present Pope too.

However, says Mr. Hill, "The distinction between *sins* and innocent *infirmities*, is derived from the Romish church."

Ans. 1. We rejoice, if the church of Rome was never so unreasonable, and so deluded by Antinomian Popes, as to confound an involuntary wandering thought, an undesigned mistake, and a lamented fit of drowsiness at prayer, with adultery, murder, and incest; in order to represent Christ's mediatorial law as absolutely impracticable; and to insinuate that fallen believers, who actually commit the above-mentioned crimes, are God's dear children, as well as the obedient believers, who labour under the above described *infirmities*.

2. We apprehend that Mr. Hill, and the divines who have espoused Dr. Crisp's errors, are some of the last persons in the world by whom we may, with decency, be charged to hold "*licentious*" doctrines. And we are truly sorry that any Protestants should make it their business to corrupt that part of the Gospel, which, if we believe Mr. Hill, the Pope himself has modestly spared.

3. Mr. Hill might, with much more propriety have objected, that our distinction is derived from the *Jewish church*; for, the "*old rogue*," as some Solifidians have rashly called *Moses*, evidently made a distinction between *sin* and *infirmities*; he punished a daring Sabbath-breaker, and an audacious rebel, with death,—with present death,—with the most terrible kind of death. The language of his burning zeal seemed to be that of David, *Be not merciful to them that offend of malicious wickedness*, Psalm lix. 5.—But upon such as accidentally contracted some involuntary pollution, he inflicted no other punishment than that of a separation from the congregation till evening.—If Mr. Hill consider the difference of these two punishments, he must either give place to perverseness, or confess, that wilful sins, and involuntary infirmities, were not Calvinistically confounded by the mediator of the Old Covenant; and that *Moses* himself made a rational and evangelical distinction between the spot of God's children, and that of the perverse and crooked generation, Deut. xxxii. 4.

4. That *Christ*, the equitable and gracious mediator of the New Covenant, was not less merciful than stern *Moses*, with respect to the distinction we contend for, appears to us evident from his making a wide difference between the almost involuntary drowsiness of the eleven disciples in *Gethsemane*, and the malicious watchfulness of the traitor *Judas*. Concerning the offence of the former, he said, *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*; and with respect to the crime of the latter he declared, *It would be good for that man if he had never been born*.

5. *David* and *Paul* exactly followed herein the doctrine of *Moses* and *Christ*. The Psalmist says, *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have the dominion over me: then shall I be upright*; [or rather, as the word literally means in the original] *I shall be perfect and innocent from the great transgression*, Psalm xix. 13. Hence it is evident that some transgressions are incompatible with the perfection which *David* prayed for; and that some errors, or some secret (unnoticed, involuntary) faults are not.

6. This, we apprehend, is evident from his own words, *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin; and in whose spirit there is no guile*, though there may be some improprieties in his words and actions. Psalm. xxxii. 2. *David's* meaning may be illustrated by the well-known case of *Nathanael*. *Philip* said to him, *We have found him of whom Moses wrote in the law*: [a clear proof this, by the by, that the law frequently means the Jewish Gospel, which testifies of *Christ* to come:] it is *Jesus of Nazareth*. And *Nathanael* said unto him, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Here was an involuntary fault, an improper quoting of a proverbial expression: and nevertheless, as he quoted it with a good intention, and to make way for a commendable inquiry into the report which he heard, his error was consistent with that degree of perfection which implies innocence from the great [wilful] transgression. This I prove: 1. By his conduct; *Philip* saith unto him, *Come and see*: and he instantly went, without betraying the least degree of the self-conceited stiffness, surly pride, and morose resistance which always accompany the unloving prejudice by which the law of *Christ* is broken.—And 2. By our Lord's testimony: *Jesus* saw *Nathanael* coming to him, and saith of him, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!* Our Lord's word for *guile*, in the original, is *δολος*, the very word, which being also connected with a negative, forms the epithet *αδολος*, whereby St. *Peter* denotes the unadulterated purity of God's word, which he compares to sincere or perfectly pure milk. 1 Peter ii. 2. Hence I conclude, that, *Christ* himself being witness, [evangelically speaking] there was

no more *indwelling insincerity* in *Nathanael*, than there is in the pure word of God, and that this is the happy case of all those who fully deserve the glorious title of *Israelite indeed*, which our Lord publicly bestowed upon *Nathanael*. To return :

7. If to make a distinction between *sins* and *infirmities*, constitutes a man half a Papist, it is evident that *St. Paul* was not less tinctured with popery (so called) than *David*, *Moses*, and *Jesus Christ* : for he writes to *Timothy*—*them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear*, 1 Tim. v. 20. And yet, he writes to the Romans, *We that are strong should bear with the infirmities of the weak*. Rom. xv. 1. Here are two plain commands ; the first, not to bear with *sins* ; and the second, to bear with *infirmities* : a demonstration this, that there is an essential difference between *sins* and *infirmities*, and that this difference is discoverable to others, and much more to ourselves. Nay, in most cases, it is so discernible to those who have their spiritual senses properly disposed, that they can as easily distinguish between *sins* (properly so called) and *infirmities*, as a wise judge can distinguish between accidental death, and wilful murder ; or between unknowingly passing a false guinea with a kind intention to relieve the poor, and treasonably coining it with a roguish design to defraud the public. The difference between the sun and the moon is not more striking in the natural world, than the difference between *sins* and *infirmities* is in the moral world. Nevertheless, blind prejudice will probably confound them still, to darken counsel, and to raise a cloud of logical dust, that *Antinomianism*, (the Diana of the Imperfectionists) may make her escape, and save *indwelling sin*, which is the claw of the hellish lion, the tooth of the old dragon, the fishing-hook of Satan, and the deadly sting of the king of terrors.

8. Judicious Calvinists have seen the propriety of the distinction, for which we are represented as unsound Protestants. Of many whom I could mention, I shall only quote one, who, for his piety, wisdom, and moderation, is an honour to Calvinism.—I mean the Rev. Mr. *Newton*, Minister of *Olney*. In his *Letters on Religious Subjects*, p. 199, he makes this ingenuous confession—“ The experience of past years has taught me” [and I hope that some day or other it will also teach our other opponents] “ to distinguish between ignorance and disobedience. The Lord is gracious to the weakness of his people ; many involuntary mistakes will not interrupt their communion with him.—He pities their *infirmity*, and teaches them to do better. But if they dispute his *known will*, and act against the dictates of conscience, they will surely suffer for it.—*Wilful sin* sadly perplexes and retards our progress.” Here is, if I mistake not, a clear distinction

made by a true Protestant, between *disobedience*, or *wilful sin*, and *weakness*, *involuntary mistakes*, or *infirmity*.

9. If Mr. Hill will not regard Mr. Newton's authority, I beg he would show some respect for the authority of our Church, and the import of his own prayers. If there be absolutely no difference between *wilful sins*, *involuntary negligences*, and *unavoidable ignorances*: why does our Church distinguish them, when she directs us to pray in the litany, *that it may please God to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances*? If these three words have but one meaning, should not Mr. Hill leave out the two last, as ridiculous tautology? Or, at least, to remove from our Church the suspicion of Popery, should he not pray every Sunday that God would *forgive us all our sins, sins, and sins*!

From the nine preceding remarks, and the quotations made therein, it appears, if I mistake not, that our important distinction between *wilful sin* and *infirmities*, or *involuntary offences*, recommends itself to reason and conscience; that it is supported by the law of *Moses*, and the Gospel of *Christ*; by the psalms of *David*, and the epistles of *St. Paul*; by the writings of judicious Calvinists, and the liturgy of our Church; and therefore, it is as absurd to call it a *popish* distinction, because the Papists are not injudicious enough to reject it, as it is absurd to call the doctrine of Christ's divinity, a *doctrine of devils*, because devils acknowledge him to be the Son of God, and their Omnipotent Controller.

Should Mr. Hill reply, that if this distinction cannot properly be called *popish*, it deserves to be called "*Antinomian*" and "*licentious*;" because it countenances all the men who give to their grossest sins the soft name of *innocent infirmities*; we can answer: it has been proved, that *Moses* and *Jesus Christ* held this distinction; and therefore to call it *Antinomian* and *licentious*, is to call not only *Christ*, the holy one of God, but even "*legal*" *Moses*, an *Antinomian*, and an advocate for *licentiousness*. See what these Calvinian refinements come to!—2. The men who abuse the doctrine of the distinction between *sins* and *infirmities*, abuse as much the doctrine of *God's mercy*, and the important distinction between *working days* and the *Lord's day*: but, is this a proof that the doctrines of *God's mercy*, and the distinction between the *Lord's day* and other days, are "*licentious tenets*, against which all that wish well to the interests of Protestantism should protest in a body?"

If Mr. Hill try to embarrass us by saying, "Where will you draw the line between *wilful sins*, and [evangelically speaking] *innocent infirmities*?"—We reply, without the least degree of embarrassment.

Where *Moses* and the prophets have drawn it in the Old Testament ; where *Christ* and the apostles have drawn it in the New ; and where we draw it after them in these pages. And retorting the question to show its frivolousness, we ask, where will Mr. *Hill* draw the line between the free, evangelical observing of the Lord's day, and the superstitious, Pharisaic keeping of the Sabbath ; or between weak saving faith, and wilful unbelief ? Nay, upon his principles, where will he draw it even between a *good* and a *bad* work ; if all our good works are really dung, dross, and filthy rags ?

However, as the question is important, I shall give it a more particular answer. An *infirmity* is a breach of Adam's law of paradisiacal perfection, which our covenant God does not require of us now : and [evangelically speaking] a *sin* for Christians, is a breach of Christ's evangelical law of Christian perfection—a perfection this, which God requires of all Christian believers.—An *infirmity* [considering it with the error which it occasions] is consistent with pure love to God and man : but a *sin* is inconsistent with that love.—An *infirmity* is free from guile, and has its root in our *animal* frame ; but a *sin* is attended with guile, and has its root in our *moral* frame, springing either from the habitual corruption of our hearts, or from the momentary perversion of our tempers.—An *infirmity* unavoidably results from our unhappy circumstances, and from the necessary infelicities of our present state. But a *sin* flows from the avoidable and perverse choice of our own will.—An *infirmity* has its foundation in an involuntary want of power : and a *sin*, in a wilful abuse of the present light and power we have. The one arises from involuntary ignorance and weakness, and is always attended with a good meaning—a meaning unmixed with any *bad* design, or *wicked* prejudice : but the other has its source in voluntary perverseness and presumption, and is always attended with a meaning altogether *bad* ; or, at best, with a good meaning founded on *wicked* prejudices. If to this line the candid reader add the line which we have drawn [Section VI.] between the perfection of a Gentile, that of a Jew, and that of a Christian, he will not easily mistake in passing a judgment between the wilful sins, which are inconsistent with an evangelically sinless perfection, and the innocent infirmities which are consistent with such a perfection.

Confounding what God has divided, and *dividing* what the God of truth has joined, are the two capital stratagems of the god of error. The first he has chiefly used to eclipse or darken the doctrine of Christian perfection. By means of his instruments, he has perpetually confounded the Christless law of perfect innocence, given to Adam before the fall ; and the mediatorial, evangelical law of penitential

faith, under which our first parents were put, when God promised them the Seed of the woman, the mild Lawgiver, the Prince of Peace, the gentle King of the Jews, who *breaks not the bruised reed, nor quenches the smoking flax*, but compassionately tempers the doctrines of justice by the doctrines of grace, and instead of the law of innocence, which he has kept and made honourable for us, has substituted his own evangelical law of repentance, faith, and Gospel obedience, which law is actually kept, according to one or another of its various editions, by all *just men made perfect*; that is, by all the *wise virgins*, who are ready for the midnight cry and the marriage of the Lamb.

Hence it appears that *Pelagius* and *Augustine* were both right in some things, and wrong in a capital point. *Pelagius*, the father of the rigid Perfectionists and rigid Free-willers, asserted that Christ's law could be kept, and that the keeping of that law was all the perfection which that law requires. So far *Pelagius* was right: having reason, conscience, and Scripture on his side. But he was grossly mistaken, if he confounded Christ's mediatorial law, with the law of paradisiacal perfection. This was his capital error, which led him to deny original sin, and to extol human powers so excessively as to intimate, that by a faithful and diligent use of them, man may be as innocent, and as perfect, as Adam was before the fall.

On the other hand, *Augustine*, the father of the rigid Imperfectionists and rigid Bound-willers, maintained that our natural powers being greatly weakened and depraved by the fall, we cannot, by all the helps which the Gospel affords, keep the law of innocence; that is, always think, speak, and act, with that exactness, and propriety, which became immortal man, when God pronounced him *very good* in Paradise: he asserted, that every impropriety of thought, language, or behaviour, is a breach of the law of perfection, under which God placed innocent man in the garden of Eden: and he proved that every breach of this law is sin: and that of consequence, there can be no Adamaic paradisiacal perfection in this life. So far *Augustine* was very right:—so far reason and Scripture support his doctrine:—and so far the Church is obliged to him for having made a stand against *Pelagius*. But he was very much mistaken when he abolished the essential difference which there is between our Creator's law of strict justice, and our Redeemer's mediatorial law of justice tempered with grace and mercy. Hence he concluded that there is absolutely no keeping the law, and consequently no performing any perfect obedience in this life; and that we must sin as long as we continue in the body. Thus, while *Pelagius* made adult Christians as perfectly

sinless as Adam was in paradise ; *Augustine* made them so completely sinful, as to make it necessary for every one of them to go into a death purgatory, crying, " There is a law in my members, which brings me into captivity to the law of sin. Sin dwelleth in me. With my flesh I serve the law of sin. I am carnal, sold under sin.—O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me ?"

The Scripture doctrine which we vindicate, stands at an equal distance from these extremes of *Pelagius* and *Augustine*. It rejects, with *Augustine*, the Adamic perfection which *Pelagius* absurdly pleaded for : and it explodes, with *Pelagius*, the necessary continuance of indwelling sin, and carnal bondage, which *Augustine* no less absurdly maintained. Thus, adult believers are still sinners,—still imperfect, according to the righteous law of *paradisiacal* innocence and perfection : and yet, they are really saints, and perfect, according to the gracious law of *evangelical* justification and perfection ; a law this, which considers as upright and perfect, all the godly Heathens, Jews, and Christians, who are *without guile* in their respective folds, or under their various dispensations. Thus, by still vindicating the various editions of Christ's mediatorial law, which has been at times almost buried under heaps of *Pharisaic* and *Antinomian* mistakes, we still defend practical religion. And as in the Scripture scales, by proving the evangelical marriage of FREE GRACE, and FREE WILL, we have reconciled Zelotes and Honestus with respect to *faith* and *works* ; so in this essay, by proving the evangelical union of the doctrines of *grace* and *justice*, in the mild and righteous law of our Redeemer, we reconcile *Augustine* and *Pelagius*, and force them to give up reason and Scripture, or to renounce the monstrous errors which keep them asunder : I mean the deep, *Antinomian* errors of *Augustine*, with respect to *indwelling sin* and a *death purgatory* ; and the high-flown, *Pharisaic* errors of *Pelagius*, with regard to Adamic perfection, and a complete freedom from original degeneracy.

The method we have used to bring about this reconciliation is quite plain and uniform. We have kept our Scripture Scales even, and used every weight of the sanctuary without prejudice ; especially those weights which the Moralists throw aside as *Calvinistic* and *Antinomian* ; and those which the Solifidians cast away as *Mosaic* and legal. Thus, by evenly balancing the two Gospel axioms, we have reunited the doctrines of *grace* and of *justice*, which heated *Augustine* and heated *Pelagius* have separated ; and we have distinguished our Redeemer's *evangelical* law, from our Creator's *paradisiacal* law ; two distinct laws these, which those illustrious antagonists have con-

founded ; and we flatter ourselves that, by this artless mean, another step is taken towards bringing the *two* partial Gospels of the day, to the old standard of the *one*, complete Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have done unfolding our reconciling plan : but the disciples of *Augustine*, rallied by *Calvin*, have not done attacking it. I hope that I have answered the objections of *Mr. Hill*, *Mr. Toplady*, and *Mr. Martin*, against the evangelical perfection which we defend ; but another noted divine of their persuasion comes up to their assistance. It is the Rev. *Mr. Matthew Henry*, who has deservedly got a great name among the Calvinists, by his valuable *Exposition of the Bible* in five folio volumes. This huge piece of ordnance carries a heavy ball which threatens the very heart of our sinless Gospel. It is too late to attempt an abrupt and silent flight. Let then *Mr. Henry* fire away. If our doctrine of an evangelically sinless perfection is founded upon a rock, it will stand ; the ponderous ball which seems likely to demolish it will rebound against the doctrine of indwelling sin : and the standard of Christian liberty which we wave, will be more respected than ever.

“Corruption [*saieth that illustrious commentator,*] is left remaining in the hearts of good Christians, that they may learn war, may keep on the whole armour of God, and stand continually upon their guard.”—

“Thus corruption is driven out of the hearts of believers by *little and little*. The work of sanctification is carried on gradually : but that judgment will at length be brought forth into a complete victory.”—Namely, when death shall come to the assistance of the atoning blood, and of the Spirit’s power. That this is *Mr. Henry’s* doctrine is evident from his comment on Gal. v. 17. “In a renewed man, where there is something of a good principle, there is a struggle between, &c. the *remainders of sin*, and the beginnings of grace ; and this, Christians must expect, will be their exercise *as long as they continue in this world* ;”—or, to speak more intelligibly, *till they go into the death purgatory*.

Not to mention here again, Gal. v. 17, &c. *Mr. Henry* builds this uncomfortable doctrine upon the following text, *The Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little ; thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee*. Deut. vii. 22. And he gives us to understand that “*pride, and security, and other sins*” are “*the enemies more dangerous than the beasts of the field that would be apt to increase*” upon us, if God delivered us from indwelling sin, i. e. from the remains of *pride, and carnal security, and other sins*. This exposition is backed by an appeal to the following text, *Now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove*

Israel by them—to know whether they [the Israelites] would hearken to the commandments of the Lord, Judges iii. 1, 4. See Mr. Henry's *Exposition* on these passages.

To this we answer, 1. That it is absurd to build the mighty doctrine of a death purgatory upon an historical allusion. If such allusions were proofs, we could easily multiply our arguments. We could say, that sin is to be utterly destroyed, because Moses says, *The Lord delivered into our hands Og and all his people, and we smote him until none was left unto him remaining.* Deut. iii. 3.—Because Joshua smote Horam king of Gezer, and his people, until he had left him none remaining. Deut. iii. 33.—Because Saul was commanded utterly to destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and lost his crown for sparing their king. Because when God overthrew Pharaoh and all his host there remained not so much as one of them. Exod. xiv. 28. Because when God rained fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah, he overthrew all their [wicked] inhabitants:—and because Moses says, *I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust, and cast the dust thereof into the brook.* Deut. ix. 21. But we should blush to build the doctrine of Christian perfection upon so absurd and slender a foundation. And yet such a foundation would be far more solid than that on which Mr. Henry builds the doctrine of Christian imperfection, and of the necessary indwelling of sin in the most holy believers: for

2. Before God permitted the Canaanites to remain in the land, he had said, “when ye are passed over Jordan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you, and destroy all their pictures:—for I have given you the land to possess it.—But, if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you, then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein you dwell. And moreover I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.” Numb. xxxiii. 51, &c. Hence it appears, that the sparing of the Canaanites was a *punishment* inflicted upon the Israelites, as well as a *favour* shown to the Canaanites, some of whom, like *Rahab* and the Gibeonites, probably turned to the Lord, and as *God's creatures*, enjoyed his saving mercy in the land of promise. But is *indwelling sin* one of *God's creatures*, that God should show it any favour, and should refuse his assistance to the faithful believers who are determined to give it no quarter? Can *indwelling sin* be converted to God, as the *indwelling Canaanites* might, and as some of them undoubtedly were?

3. But the capital flaws of Mr. Henry's argument are, I apprehend, two suppositions, the absurdity of which is glaring: "Corruption [says he] is left remaining in the hearts of good Christians, that they may learn war, may keep on the whole armour of God, and stand continually upon their guard." Just as if Christ had not *learned war, kept on the breast-plate of righteousness, and stood continually upon his guard*, without the help of indwelling sin!—just as if the world, the devil, the weakness of the flesh, and death, our last enemy, with which our Lord so severely conflicted, were not adversaries powerful enough to *prove us, to engage us to learn war, and to make us keep on and use the whole armour of God to the end of our life!*—The other absurd supposition is, that "*pride, and security, and other sins,*" which are supposed to be typified by the *wild beasts* mentioned in Deut. vii. 22. *will increase upon us by the destruction of indwelling sin.* But is it not as ridiculous to suppose this, as to say, *pride will increase upon us by the destruction of pride; and carnal security will gather strength by the extirpation of carnal security, and by the implanting of constant watchfulness, which is a branch of the Christian perfection which we contend for?*"

4. With respect to the inference which Mr. Henry draws from these words, *Thou mayest not consume them at once: the Lord will put them out before thee by little and little*; is it not highly absurd also? Does he give us the shadow of an argument to prove, that this verse was spoken of our *indwelling corruptions*? And suppose it was, would this prove that the doctrine of death purgatory is true? You say to a greedy person you must eat your dinner *by little and little*, you cannot swallow it down at one gulp: a farmer teaches his son to plough, and says, We cannot plough this field *at once*, but we may plough it *by little and little*, i. e. by making one furrow after another, till we end the last furrow. Hence I draw the following inferences: we eat our meals, and plough our fields, *by little and little*; and therefore no dinner can be eaten, and no field ploughed before death. A surgeon says that the healing of a wound "*is carried on gradually:*" hence his prejudiced mate runs away with the notion, that no wound can be healed so long as a patient is alive. Who does not see the flaw of these conclusions?

5. But the greatest absurdity, I apprehend, is yet behind. Not to observe, that we do not remember to have read any command in our Bibles not to consume *sin at once*: or any declaration, that God will put it out *only "by little and little:"* we ask, What length of time do you suppose God means? You make him say that he will make an end of our indwelling sin *by little and little*; do you think he means four days, four years, or fourscore years?—If you say that God cannot or

will not wholly cleanse the thoughts of our hearts under *fourscore years*, you send all who die under that age into hell, or into some purgatory where they must wait till the *eighty years* of their conflict with indwelling sin are ended.—If you say, that God *can* or *will* do it in *four days*, but not under; you absurdly suppose that the penitent thief remained at least three days in Paradise full of *indwelling sin*; seeing his *sanctification* was to be “*carried on gradually*” in the space of *four days at least*.—If you are obliged to grant, that, when the words, *by little and little*, are applied to the destruction of indwelling sin, they may mean *four hours* [the time which the penitent thief probably lived after his conversion] as well as *four days*; do not you begin to be ashamed of your system? And if you reply, that death alone fully extirpates indwelling sin; does not this favourite tenet of yours overturn Mr. Henry’s doctrine about the *necessity* of the slow, “*gradual*” destruction of indwelling sin? May not a sinner *believe in a moment*, when God helps him to believe? And may not a believer [whom you suppose *necessarily* full of indwelling sin as long as he is in this world] *die in a moment*?—If you answer in the *negative*, you deny the sudden death of John the Baptist, St. James, and St. Paul, who had their heads cut off in a moment:—In a word, you deny that any believer can die *suddenly*.—If you reply in the *affirmative*, you give up the point, and grant that indwelling sin may be *instantaneously* destroyed. And now what becomes of Mr. Henry’s argument, which supposes that sanctification can never be complete without a *long, gradual process*; and that the extirpation of sin cannot take place but “*by little and little*?”

I have set before thee, reader, the *lights* and *shades* of our doctrine: I have produced our arguments, and those of our opponents; and now, say which of them bear the stamp of *imperfection*? If thou pronounce that *Urim* and *Thummim*, *light* and *perfection*, belong to the arguments of Mr. Hill, Mr. Toplady, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Henry, I must lay down my pen, and deplore the infelicity of our having a reason, which unsays in my breast what it says in thine. But if thou find, after mature deliberation, that our arguments are *light in the Lord*, as being more agreeable to the dictates of unprejudiced reason, than those of our antagonists, more conformable to the plain declarations of the Sacred Writers, fitter to encourage believers in the way of holiness, more suitable to the nature of undefiled religion, and better adapted to the display of the Redeemer’s glory; I shall enjoy the double pleasure of *embracing the Truth*, and of *embracing her together with thee*: in the mean time, closing here the *argumentative* part of this Essay, I just beg the continuance of thy favourable atten-

tion, while I *practically* address perfect Pharisees, prejudiced Imperfectionists, imperfect believers, and perfect Christians.

SECTION XVII.

An Address to perfect Christian Pharisees.

I ADDRESS you *first*, ye perfect Christian Pharisees; because ye are most ready to profess Christian perfection, though alas! ye stand at the greatest distance from *perfect humility*, the grace which is most essential to the perfect Christian's character; and because the enemies of our doctrine make use of you *first*, when they endeavour to root it up from the earth.

That ye may know whom I mean by *perfect Christian Pharisees*, give me leave to show you your own picture in the glass of a plain description. Ye have *professedly* entered into the fold where Christ's sheep, which are perfected in love, rest all at each other's feet, and at the feet of the Lamb of God. But how have ye entered?—By *Christ the door*? or at the door of presumption?—Not by Christ the door: for Christ is *meekness* and *lowliness* manifested in the flesh: but ye are still ungente and fond of praise. When he pours out his soul as a divine Prophet, he says, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* But ye overlook this humble door. Your proud gigantic minds are above stooping low enough to follow Him who *made himself of no reputation* that he might raise us to heavenly honours; and who, to pour just contempt upon human pride, had his first night's lodging in a stable, and spent his last night partly on the cold ground in a storm of divine wrath, and partly in an ignominious confinement, exposed to the greatest indignities which Jews and Gentiles could pour upon him. He rested his infant head upon hay, his dying head upon thorns. A manger was his cradle, and a cross his death-bed. Thirty years he travelled from the sordid stable to the accursed tree, unnoticed by his own peculiar people. In the brightest of his days poor fishermen, some Galilean woman, and a company of shouting children, formed all his retinue. Shepherds were his first attendants, and malefactors his last companions.

His first beatitude was, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*; and the last, *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.* His first doctrine was *Repent*: nor was the last unlike to it; *If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example*

that ye should do as I have done to you.—He that will be first among you let him be the least of all. Now far from practising with godly sincerity this last lesson of our humble Lord, you do not so much as truly relish the first. Ye do not delight in, nay, ye abhor penitential poverty of spirit. Your humility is not cordial, and wrought into your nature by grace: but complimentary, and woven into your carriage by art. Ye are humble in looks, in gestures, in voice, in dress, in behaviour; so far as external humility helps you to secure the reputation of perfect Christians, at which ye aspire from a motive of Pharisaic ambition; but ye continue strangers to the childlike simplicity, and unaffected lowliness of Christ's perfect disciples. Ye are the very reverse of those *Israelites in whom there is no guile*. Ye resemble the artful *Gibeonites*, who for a time imposed upon *Joshua's* artless simplicity. Your feigned profession of special grace deceives those of God's children, who have more of the simplicity of the dove than of the serpent's wisdom. Ye choose the lowest place, but ye do not love it. If ye cheerfully take it, it is not among your equals, but among your inferiors: because you think that such a condescending step may raise the credit of your humility, without endangering your superiority: if ye stoop, and go down, it is not because ye see yourselves unworthy of the seat of honour; but because ye hope that people will by and by say to you, *Come up higher*. Your pharisaic cunning aims at once at wearing the coronet of genuine humility, and the crown of self-exalting pride. Ye love to be esteemed of men for your goodness and devotion: ye want to be admired for your exactness, zeal, and gracious attainments. The pride of the Jewish Pharisees was coarse in comparison of yours. They wore the rough garment, and you wear the silks of spiritual vanity: and even when ye die them in the blood of the Lamb, which you extol in word, it is to draw the confidence of humble Christians by your Christian appearance and language, more than to follow the propensity of a new nature, which loves to be clothed with humility, and feels itself in its own centre, when it rests in deep poverty of spirit, and sees that God is all in all.

One of the greatest ends of Christ's coming into the world, was to empty us of ourselves, and to fill us with humble love; but ye are still full of yourselves, and void of Christ, that is, void of *humility incarnate*. Ye still aim at some wrong mark: whether it be self-glory, self-interest, self-pleasure, self-party, or self-applause. In a word, one selfish scheme or another, contrary to the pure love of God and of your neighbour, secretly destroys the root of your profession, and may be compared to the unseen worm that ate the

root of *Jonah's* gourd. Ye have a narrow, contracted spirit: ye do not gladly sacrifice your private satisfaction, your interest, your reputation, your prejudices, to the general interest of *truth* and *love*, and to the public good of the whole body of Christ. Ye are in secret bondage to men, places, and things. Ye do not heartily entertain the wisdom from above, which is pure, gentle, easy to be entreated, and full of mercy.—Nay, ye are above conviction: gross sinners yield to truth before you. Like *Jehu*, ye are zealous, and ye pretend that it is for the Lord of hosts: but alas! it is for your opinions, your party, your honour. In a word, ye do not walk in constant, solemn expectation of death and judgment: your will is not broken: your carnal confidence is yet alive: the heavenly dove does not sit in your breast: *self*, wrapt up in the cloak of humility, is still set up in your hearts, and in secret you serve that cursed idol more than God. Satan, transformed into an angel of light, has artfully led you to the profession of Christian perfection through a circle of external performances, through glorious forms of doctrine in the letter, and through a fair show of zeal for complete holiness: the Lord, to punish your formality, has in part given you up to your delusion: and now, ye as much believe yourselves *perfect* Christians, as the Pharisees, in our Lord's day, believed themselves *perfect* Jews.

Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, has borne his faithful testimony against such witnesses of *perfect love* as ye are. If ye despise this address, regard his remarks. "Others [says he] who think they have the direct witness of their being renewed in love, are nevertheless manifestly wanting in the *fruit*.—Some are undoubtedly wanting in *long-suffering*, Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in every thing give thanks, and rejoice evermore. They are not happy; at least not *always* happy. For sometimes they *complain*. They say, 'This is hard!'—Some are wanting in *gentleness*. They *resist evil*, instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reproved, or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well. They behave with more distance and reserve than they did before, &c.—Some are wanting in *goodness*. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look, in their air, in the whole tenor of their behaviour; not kind to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons; particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own house-

hold. They do not long, study, endeavour by every mean, to make all about them happy.—Some are wanting in *fidelity*, a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity. Their love is hardly *without dissimulation*: something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarce to avoid a degree of fawning.—Some are wanting in *meekness*, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion; they have too much of the one, too little of the other: or they are not duly mixt and tempered together so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony.—Some are wanting in *temperance*. They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food, which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigour of the body. Or they are not temperate in sleep: they do not rigorously adhere to what is best for body and mind. They use neither fasting nor abstinence,” &c.

I have described your delusion: but who can describe its fatal consequences? Who can tell the mischief it has done, and continues to do? The few sincere perfectionists, and the multitude of captious imperfectionists, have equally found you out. The former are grieved for you; and the latter triumph through you.

When the sincere perfectionists consider the inconsistency of your profession, they are ready to give up their faith in Christ's all-cleansing blood, and their hope of getting a clean heart in this life. They are tempted to follow the multitude of professors, who sit down in self-imputed righteousness, or in Solifidian notions of an ideal perfection in Christ. And it is well if some of them have not already yielded to the temptation, and begun to fight against the hopes which they once entertained of loving God with all their hearts. It is well if some, through you, have not been led to say; “I once sweetly enjoyed the thought of doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. Once I hopefully prayed, God would so cleanse my heart, that I might *perfectly* love him, and *worthily* magnify his holy name in this world. But now I have renounced my hopes, and I equally abhor the doctrine of evangelical *perfection*, and that of evangelical *worthiness*. When I was a young convert, I believed that Christ could really make an end of all moral pollution, cast out the man of sin, and cleanse us from the sins of the heart, as well as from outward iniquity in this life; but I soon met with unhumbled, self-willed people, who, boldly standing up for this

glorious liberty, made me question the truth of the doctrine. Nay, in process of time, I found that some of those who most confidently professed to have attained this salvation were farther from the gentleness, simplicity, catholic spirit, and unfeigned humility of Christ, than many believers who had never considered the doctrine of Christian perfection. These offences striking in with the disappointment which I myself met with, in feebly seeking the pearl of perfect love, made me conclude that it can no more be found than the philosopher's stone, and that they are all either fools or knaves who set believers 'upon seeking it. And now I every where decry the doctrine of perfection as a dangerous delusion. I set people against it wherever I go; and my zeal in this respect has been attended with the greatest success. I have damped the hopes of many perfectionists; and I have proselyted several to the doctrine of Christian imperfection. With them I now quietly wait to be purified from indwelling sin in the article of death, and to be made perfect in another world."

This is, I fear, the language of many hearts, although it is not openly spoken by many lips. Thus are you, O ye perfect Pharisees, the great instruments, by which the tempter tears away the shield of those unsettled Israelites who look more at your inconsistencies, than they do at the beauty of holiness, the promise of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the Spirit.

But this is not all: as ye destroy the budding faith of sincere perfectionists, so ye strengthen the unbelief of the Solifidians. Through you their prejudices are grown up into a fixed detestation of Christian perfection. Ye have hardened them in their error, and furnished them with plausible arguments to destroy the truth which ye contend for. Did ye never hear their triumphs? "Ha! Ha! So would we have it! These are some of the people who stand up for sinless perfection! They are all alike. Did not I tell you, that you would find them out to be no better than temporary monsters? What monstrous pride? What touchiness, obstinacy, bigotry, and stoicism characterizes them! How do they strain at gnats and swallow camels? I had rather be an open drunkard than a perfectionist. Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before them."—These are the cutting speeches to which your glaring inconsistency, and the severe prejudices of our opponents give birth. Is it not deplorable that your tempers should thus drive men to abhor the doctrine which your lips recommend!

And what do you get by thus dispiriting the real friends of Christian perfection, and by furnishing its sworn enemies with such sharp weapons against it? Think ye that the mischief ye do shall not recoil

upon yourselves? Is not Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? If he detested the perfect Pharisaism of unhumiliated Jews, will he admire the perfect self-righteousness of aspiring Christians? If he formerly *resisted the proud, and gave grace to the humble*, what reason have ye to hope that he will submit to your spiritual pride, and reward your religious ostentation with a crown of glory? Ye perhaps cry out against Antinomianism, and I commend you for it: but are ye not deeply tainted with the worst sort of Antinomianism,—that which starches, stiffens, and swells the soul? Ye justly bear your testimony against those who render the law of Christ of none effect to believers, by degrading it into a rule which they strip of the punitive and remunerative sanctions, with which it stands armed in the sacred records. But are ye not doubly guilty, who maintain that this law is still in force as a law, and nevertheless refuse to pay it sincere, internal obedience? For when ye break the *first* commandment of Christ's evangelical law, by practically discarding penitential *poverty of spirit*; and when ye transgress the *last*, by abhorring the *lowest place*, by disdaining to *wash each other's feet*, and by refusing to *prefer others in honour before yourselves*; are ye not guilty of breaking all the law by breaking it in one point—in the capital point of humble love, which runs through all the parts of the law, as vital blood does through all the parts of the body? O how much more dangerous is the case of an *unhumbled* man, who *stiffly* walks in robes of *self-made perfection*, than that of an humble man, who through prejudice, and the force of example, *meekly* walks in robes of *self-imputed righteousness*!

Behold, thou callest thyself a *perfect Christian*, and retest in the evangelical law of Christ, which is commonly called the Gospel; thou makest thy boast of God; and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, even the way of Christian perfection, being instructed out of the Gospel: and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes, or imperfect believers; having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the Gospel. Thou therefore who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest another should not break the law of Christ, through breaking it dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed through you, among those who seek an occasion to blaspheme it. Romans ii. 17, &c. And think ye that ye shall escape the righteous judgment of God? Has Christ no woes but for the Jewish Pharisees? O be no longer mistaken. Before ye are punished by being here given up to a reprobate mind, and by being here-

after cast into the hell of hypocrites, the outer darkness, where there will be more weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, than in any other hell!—before ye are overtaken by the awful hour of death, and the dreadful day of judgment; practically learn, that Christian perfection is *the mind which was in Christ*;—especially his *humble, meek, quiet mind*;—his *gentle, free, loving spirit*. Aim at it by sinking into deep self-abhorrence; and not by using, as ye have hitherto done, the empty talk and profession of Christian perfection, as a step to reach the top of spiritual pride.

Mistake me not: I do not blame you for holding the doctrine of Christian perfection, but for wilfully missing the only way that leads to it; I mean the humble, meek, and loving Jesus, who says, *I am the way, and the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved into so great salvation. He that entereth not by this door into this sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way; [and especially he that climbeth by the way of Pharisaic formality] the same is a thief and a robber: he robs Christ of his glory, and pretends to what he has no more right to, than a thief has to your property. Would ye then be right? Do not cast away the doctrine of an evangelically sinless holiness; but contend more for it with your heart than with your lips. With all your soul press after such a perfection as Christ, St. Paul, and St. John taught and exemplified;—a perfection of meekness and humble love. Earnestly believe all the woes which the Gospel denounces against self-righteous Pharisees, and all the blessings which it promises to perfect penitents. Drink less into the letter, and more into the spirit of Christ, till like a fountain of living water, it spring up to everlasting life in your heart. Ye have climbed to the Pharisaic perfection of Saul of Tarsus, when touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless. Would ye now attain the evangelical perfection which he was possessed of when he said, *Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded?* Only follow him through the regeneration: fall to the dust before God: rise conscious of the blindness of your heart, meekly deplore it with penitential shame: and if you follow the directions laid down in the third address, I doubt not but, dangerous as your case is at present, you will be, like St. Paul, as eminent for Christian perfection, as you have hitherto been for Pharisaic formality.*

SECTION XVIII.

An Address to Prejudiced Imperfectionists.

I FEAR, that *next* to the persons whom I have just addressed, ye injure the cause of holiness, O ye believers, who have been deluded into doctrinal Antinomianism, by the bad arguments which are answered in the preceding pages. Permit me therefore to address you next: nor suffer prejudice to make you throw away this expostulation, before you have granted it a fair perusal.

Ye directly or indirectly plead for the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in your own hearts, and in the hearts of all true Christians. But may I be so bold as to ask, Who gave you leave so to do? And when were ye commissioned to propagate this unholy Gospel? Was it at your baptism, when ye were ranked among Christ's soldiers, and received a Christian name, in token that ye would *keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of your life?* and that you would *not be ashamed to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil, unto your life's end?* Are not these three enemies strong enough sufficiently to exercise your patience, and to try your warlike skill to the last? Did your sponsors promise for you that you would quarter a fourth enemy, called *indwelling sin*, in your very breast, lest ye should not have enemies enough to fight against? On the contrary, were ye not exhorted "*utterly to abolish the whole body of sin?*" If so; is it not strange that ye should spend part of your precious time in pleading, under various pretexts, for the preservation of heart-sin, a sin this, which gives life, warmth and vigour, to the whole body of sin? And is it not deplorable, that instead of conscientiously fulfilling your baptismal engagements, ye should attack those who desire to fulfil them by seeking to have *the whole body of sin* utterly abolished?

But ye are, perhaps, ministers of the established church: and in this case, I ask, When did the bishop send you upon this strange warfare? Was it at your *confirmation*, in which he bound you upon your solemn obligations to *keep God's holy will and commandments*, so as *utterly to abolish the whole body of sin?* Is it probable that he commissioned you to pull down what he *confirmed*; and to demolish the perfection which he made you vow to attain, and to *walk in all the days of your life?* If the bishop gave you no such commission at your *confirmation*, did he do it at your *ordination*, when he said, *Receive authority to preach the Word of God?* Is there no difference between

the *Word of God*, which cuts up all sin, root and branch; and the word of Satan, which asserts the propriety of the continuance of heart-sin during the term of life?—If not: did the bishop do it when he exhorted and charged you “never to cease your labour, care, and diligence, till you have done all that lieth in you, to bring all such as are committed to your charge, to that agreement of faith, and that perfectness of age in Christ, that there shall be no place left among you, for error in religion, or viciousness in life;”—that is, I apprehend, till the truth of the Gospel, and the love of the Spirit, have perfectly purified the minds, and renewed the hearts of all your hearers?

How can ye, in all your confessions and sacramental offices, renounce sin, the accursed thing which God abhors, and which obedient believers detest; and yet plead for its life, its strength, its constant energy, so long as we are in this world? We could better bear with you if ye appropriated a hand or a foot, an eye or an ear to sin, during the term of life: but who can bear your pleas for the necessary continuance of sin in the *heart*? Is it not enough that this murderer of Christ and all mankind, rambles about the walls of the city? Will ye still insinuate that he must have the citadel to the last, and keep it garrisoned with filthy lusts, base affections, bad tempers, or “diabolonians,” who, like prisoners, show themselves at the grate; and “like snakes, toads, and wild beasts, are the fiercer for being confined?” Who has taught you thus to represent Christ as the *keeper*, and not the *destroyer* of our corruptions? If believers be truly willing to get rid of sin, but cannot, because Christ has bolted their hearts with an adamant decree, which prevents sin from being turned out:—if he have irrevocably given leave to indwelling sin, to quarter for life in every Christian’s heart, as the king of France, in the last century, gave leave to his dragoons to quarter for some months in the houses of the poor oppressed Protestants; who does not see that Christ may be called the protector of indwelling sin, rather than its enemy?

Ye absurdly complain that the doctrine of Christian perfection does not exalt our Saviour, because it represents him as radically saving his obedient people from their *indwelling sin* in this life. But are ye not guilty of the very error which ye charge upon us, when ye insinuate that he *cannot* or *will not* say to our inbred sins, *Those mine enemies which will not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me*? If a common judge has power to pass sentence of death upon all the robbers, and murderers who are properly prosecuted; and if they are hanged and destroyed in a few days, weeks, or months, in consequence of his sentence; how strangely do

ye reflect upon Christ, and revive the Agag within us, when ye insinuate, that he, the Judge of all, who was *manifested for this very purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, so far forgets his errand, that he never *destroys* indwelling sin in one of his willing people, so long as they are in this world; although that sin is the capital, and most mischievous work of the devil?

Your doctrine of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin in all faithful believers, traduces not only the Son of man, but also the adorable Trinity. The *Father* gives his only begotten Son, his Isaac, to be crucified, that the ram, *sin*, may be offered up and slain: but you insinuate that the life of that cursed ram is secured by a decree which allots it the heart of all believers for a safe retreat, and a warm stable, so long as we are in this world. You represent the *Son* as an almighty Saviour, who offers to *make us free from sin*; and yet appoints, that the galling yoke of indwelling sin shall remain tied to, and bound upon our very hearts for life. Ye describe the Holy Ghost as a sanctifier, who applies Christ's all-cleansing blood to the believer's heart; filling it with the oil of holiness and gladness: and yet ye suppose that our hearts must necessarily remain *desperately wicked*, and full of *indwelling sin*! Is it right to pour contempt upon Christianity, by charging such inconsistencies upon Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

It can hardly be expected, that those, who thus misrepresent their God, should do their neighbour justice. Hence the liberty which ye take, to fix a blot upon the most holy characters. What have the prophets and apostles done to you, that ye should represent them, not only as men who had *hearts partly evil to the last*, but also as *advocates* for the necessary indwelling of sin in all believers *till death*? And why do ye so eagerly take your advantage of *holy Paul* in particular, and catch at a figurative mode of speech, to insinuate, that he was a *carnal wretch, sold under sin*, even when he expected a *crown of righteousness* at the hand of his *righteous Judge*, for having *finished his course with the just men made perfect*?—Nay, what have we done to you, that ye should endeavour to take from us the greatest comfort we have in fighting against the remains of sin? Why will ye deprive us of the pleasing and purifying hope of taking the *Jericho* which we encompass, and killing the *Goliath* whom we attack?—And what has indwelling sin done for you, that ye should still plead for the propriety of its continuance in our hearts? Is it not the root of all outward sin, and the spring of all the streams of iniquity, which carry desolation through every part of the globe? If ye hate the fruit why do ye so eagerly contend for the necessary continuance of the root?

And if ye favour godliness [for many of you undoubtedly do] why do you put such a conclusive argument as this into the mouths of the wicked? These good men contend for the propriety of *indwelling sin*, that grace may abound: and why should we not plead for the propriety of *outward sin* for the same important reason? Does not God approve of an honest heart, which scorns to cloak the inward iniquity with outward demureness.

Mr. Hill has lately published an ingenious dialogue, called, *A Lash to Enthusiasm*, in which, page 26, he uses an argument against pleading for *lukewarmness*, which, with very little variation, may be retorted against his pleading for *indwelling sin*. "Suffer me, says he, to put the sentiments of such persons [as plead for the middle way of lukewarmness] into the form of a prayer, which we may suppose would run in some such expressions as the following. O Lord, thy word requires that I should love thee with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength; that I should renounce the world," [and *indwelling sin*] "and should present myself as an holy, reasonable, and lively sacrifice unto thee: but Lord, these are such over-righteous extremes," [and *such heights of sinless perfection*] "as I cannot away with; and therefore grant that thy love, and a moderate share of the love of the world" [or of *indwelling sin*] "may both reign" [or at least continue] "in my heart at once." I ask it for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen." Mr. Hill justly adds, "Now, dear Madam, if you are shocked at such a petition, consider that it is the exact language of your own heart, whilst you can plead for what you call the middle way of religion." And I beg leave to take up his own argument, and to add with equal propriety, "Now, dear Sirs, if you are shocked at such a petition, consider that it is the exact language of your own hearts, whilst ye can plead for what ye call *indwelling sin*, or the remains of sin."

Nor can I see what ye get by such a conduct. The excruciating thorn of *indwelling sin* sticks in your hearts; we assert that Christ can and will extract it, if ye plead his promise of *sanctifying you wholly in soul, body, and spirit*. But ye say, "This cannot be: the thorn must stay in, till death extract it: and the leprosy shall cleave to the walls till the house is demolished." Just as if Christ, by radically cleansing the lepers in the days of his flesh, had not given repeated proofs of the absurdity of your argument! Just as if part of the Gospel were not, *The lepers are cleansed, and, If the Son make ye free, ye shall be free indeed!*

If ye get nothing in pleading for Christian imperfection, permit me to tell you what you lose by it, and what ye might get by steadily going on to perfection.

1. If ye earnestly aimed at Christian perfection, ye would have a bright testimony in your own souls, that you are sincere, and that ye walk agreeably to your baptismal engagements. I have already observed, that *some* of the most pious Calvinists doubt, if those who do not pursue Christian perfection are Christians at all. Hence it follows, that the more earnestly you pursue it, the stronger will be your confidence, that you are upright Christians : and when ye shall be perfected in love, ye shall have that evidence of your sincerity which will perfectly cast out servile fear which hath torment, and nourish the filial fear which has safety and delight. It is hard to conceive how we can constantly enjoy the *full assurance of faith* out of the state of Christian perfection. For so long as a Christian inwardly breaks Christ's evangelical law, he is justly condemned in his own conscience. If his heart do not condemn him for it, it is merely because he is asleep in the lap of Antinomianism. On the other hand, says St. John, *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things that make for our condemnation. But if we love indeed and in truth, which none but the perfect do at all times, hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him,* 1 John iii. 19, 20.

2. The perfect Christian, who has left all to follow Christ, is peculiarly near and dear to God. He is, if I may use the expression, one of God's favourites ; and his prayers are remarkably answered. This will appear to you indubitable, if you can receive the testimony of these who are perfected in obedient love. *Behold, say they, whatsoever we ask, we receive of him ; because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight ; that is, because we are perfected in obedient love,* 1 John iii. 22. This peculiar blessing ye lose by despising Christian perfection. Nay, so great is the union which subsists between God and the perfect members of his Son, that it is compared to *dwelling in God*, and having God *dwelling in us*, in such a manner that the Father, the Son, and the Comforter, are said to *make their abode with us*. *At that day [when ye shall be perfected in one] ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. If a man love me he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him ; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him,* John xiv. 20, 23.—Again : *He that keepeth God's commandments dwelleth in God and God in him,* 1 John iii. 24.—*Ye are my [dearest] friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you—[i. e. if ye attain the perfection of your dispensation]* John xv. 14.—Once more : *Keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever,* John xiv. 15, 16. From these scriptures it appears, that, under every dispen-

sation, the *perfect*, or they who keep the commandments, have unspeakable advantages, from which the lovers of imperfection debar themselves.

3. Ye bring far less glory to God in the state of indwelling sin, than ye would do if ye were perfected in love; for *perfect Christians* [other things being equal] glorify God more than those who remain full of inbred iniquity. Hence it is, that in the very chapter where our Lord so strongly presses Christian perfection upon his disciples, he says, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*, Matt. v. 16.—For, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit*, John xv. 8. It is true that the fruit of the perfect is not always relished by men who judge only according to appearances: but God, who judges righteous judgment, finds it rich and precious: and therefore the two mites, which the poor widow gave with a cheerful and perfect heart, were more precious in his account, and brought him more glory, than all the money which the imperfect worshippers cast into the treasury, though some of them cast in much. Hence, also, our Lord commanded that the work of *perfect love*, which Mary wrought when she anointed his feet for his burial, *should be told for a memorial of her, wherever this [the Christian] Gospel should be preached in the whole world*.—Such is the honour which the Lord puts upon the branches in him that bear fruit to perfection!

4. The *perfect Christian* [other things being equal] is a more useful member of society than the imperfect. Never will ye be such humble men, such good parents, such dutiful children, such loving brothers, such loyal subjects, such kind neighbours, such indulgent husbands, and such faithful friends, as when ye shall have obtained the perfect sincerity of obedience. Ye will then, in your degree, have the simplicity of the gentle dove, the patience of the laborious ox, the courage of the magnanimous lion, and the wisdom of the wary serpent, without any of its poison. In your little sphere of action, ye will abound in the *work of faith*, the *patience of hope*, and the *labour of love*, far more than ye did before: for a field properly weeded, and cleared from briars, is naturally more fruitful than one which is shaded by spreading brambles, or filled with the indwelling roots of noxious weeds; it being a capital mistake of the spiritual husbandmen who till the Lord's field in mystical Geneva, to suppose that the plant of humility thrives best when the roots of indwelling sin are twisted round its root.

5. None but *just men made perfect* are meet to be made partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light; an inheritance this which no

man is fit for till he has *purified himself from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit*. If modern divines, therefore, assure you, that a believer, full of indwelling sin, has a full title to heaven, believe them not; for the Holy Ghost has said, that the believer who *breaks the law of liberty in one point, is guilty of all*, and that *no defilement shall enter into heaven*: and our Lord himself has assured us, that *the pure in heart shall see God*, and that they who were ready for that sight, *went in with the bridegroom to the marriage feast of the Lamb*. And who is ready? Undoubtedly the believer whose lamp is trimmed, and burning. But is a spiritual lamp trimmed when its flame is darkened by the black fungus of indwelling sin? Again: who shall be saved into glory, but the man whose heart is *washed from iniquity*? But is that heart *washed* which continues full of indwelling corruption? Wo, therefore, be to the Heathens, Jews, and Christians, who trifle away the *accepted time*, and die without being in a state of Heathen, Jewish, or Christian perfection! They have no chance of going to heaven, but through the purgatory preached by the Heathens, the Papists, and the Calvinists. And should the notions of these purgatories be groundless, it unavoidably follows, that unpurged or imperfect souls must, at death, rank with the unready souls whom our Lord calls *foolish virgins*, and against whom the door of heaven will be shut. How awful is this consideration, my dear brethren! How should it make us stretch every nerve till we have attained the perfection of our dispensation! I would not encourage tormenting fears in an unscriptural manner; but I should rejoice if all who call Jesus, Lord, would mind his solemn declarations—I say unto you, my friends, *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c. but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him, who will burn in the fire of wrath those who harbour the indwelling man of sin*, lest he should be utterly consumed by the fire of love.

Should ye cry out against this doctrine, and ask if all imperfect Christians are in a *damnable* state? We reply, that so long as a Christian believer sincerely presses after Christian perfection he is safe; because he is in the way of duty, and were he to die at midnight, before midnight God would certainly bring him to Christian perfection, or bring Christian perfection to him; for we are confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, because they work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. But if a believer fall, loiter, and rest upon former experiences: depending upon a self-made, Pharisaical perfection; our chief message to him is that of St. Paul, *Awake thou that*

sleepest,—Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for thou hast not the heart-purifying knowledge of God, which is eternal life. Arise from the dead; call for oil, and Christ will give thee light. Otherwise thou shalt share the dreadful fate of the lukewarm Laodiceans, and of the foolish virgins, whose lamps went out, instead of shining more and more to the perfect day.

6. This is not all: as ye will be fit for judgment, and a glorious heaven, when ye shall be perfected in love; so you will actually enjoy a gracious heaven in your own souls. You will possess *within you the kingdom of God*, which consists in settled *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. But so long as ye neglect Christian perfection, and continue sold under indwelling sin, ye not only risk the loss of the heaven of heavens, but ye lose a little heaven upon earth: for perfect Christians are so full of peace and love, that they *triumph in Christ with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, and rejoice in tribulation with a patience which has its perfect work*. Yea, they *count it all joy when they fall into divers trials*; and such is their deadness to the world, that they are exceeding glad when men say all manner of evil of them falsely for Christ's sake. How desirable is such a state!—And who, but the blessed above, can enjoy a happiness superior to him who can say, *I am ready to be offered up*. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but, O death, where is thy sting? Not in my heart, since the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:—Not in my mind, for to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Now this peculiar happiness ye lose, so long as ye continue imperfect Christians.

7. But supposing a Christian, who dies in a state of Christian imperfection, can escape damnation, and make shift to get to heaven; it is certain that he cannot go into the glorious mansion of perfect Christians, nor shine among the stars of the first magnitude. The wish of my soul is, that if God's wisdom has so ordered it, imperfect Christians may one day rank among perfect Jews, or perfect Heathens. But upon even this supposition, what will they do with their indwelling sin? For a perfect Gentile, and a perfect Jew, are *without guile*, according to their light, as well as a perfect Christian. Lean not then to the doctrine of the continuance of indwelling sin till death;—a doctrine this on which a Socrates, or a Melchisedec, would be afraid to venture his Heathen perfection, and eternal salvation. On the contrary, by Christian perfection, ye may rise to the brightest crowns of righteousness, and shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father. O for a noble ambition to obtain one of the first seats in glory! O for a con-

stant, evangelical striving to have the most *abundant entrance ministered unto you into the kingdom of God!* O for a throne among these peculiarly redeemed saints, who *sing the new song, which none can learn but themselves.* It is not Christ's to give those exalted thrones out of mere distinguishing grace: no; they may be forfeited; for they shall be given to those for whom they are prepared; and they are prepared for them, who, evangelically speaking, are *worthy. They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy,* says Christ: and they shall *sit at my right hand, and at my left in my kingdom,* who shall be worthy of that honour: *for them that honour me, says the Lord, I will honour.—Behold I come quickly; my reward is with me, and I will render to every man according to his works.* And what reward, think ye, will Christ give you, O my dear mistaken brethren, if he find you still passing jests upon the doctrine of Christian perfection which he so strongly recommends?—Still pleading for the continuance of indwelling sin, which he so greatly abhors?

8. Your whole system of indwelling sin and imputed perfection, stands upon two of the most dangerous and false maxims which were ever advanced. The first, which begets Antinomian presumption, runs thus, “Sin cannot destroy us either in this world or in the world to come:” and the second, which is productive of Antinomian despair, is, “Sin cannot be destroyed in this world.” O how hard is it for those who worship where these Siren-songs pass for sweet songs of Zion, not to be drawn into one of these fatal conclusions! “What need is there of attacking sin with so much eagerness, since, even in the name of the Lord, I cannot destroy it? And why should I resist it with so much watchfulness, since my eternal life and salvation are absolutely secured, and the most poisonous cup of iniquity cannot destroy me, though I should drink of it every day for months or years?”—If ye fondly think that ye can neither go backward into a sinful, cursed Egypt, nor yet go forward into a sinless, holy Caanan, how natural will it be for you to say, *Soul, take thy ease, and rest awhile in this wilderness on the pillow of self-imputed perfection?* Oh! how many are surprised by the midnight cry in this Laodicean rest! What numbers meet death with a Solifidian *Lord! Lord!* in their mouths, and with *indwelling sin* in their hearts! And how inexpressible will be our horror, if we perceive our want of holiness and Christian perfection only when it will be too late to attain them! To conclude:

9. Indwelling sin is not only the *sting of death*, but the very hell of hells, if I may use the expression: for a sinless saint in a *local hell*,

would dwell in a holy, loving God ; and, of consequence, in a *spiritual* heaven : like Shadrach in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, he might have devouring flames curling about him ; but, within him, he would still have the flame of divine love, and the joy of a good conscience. But so much of *indwelling sin* as we carry about us, so much of *indwelling hell* ;—so much of the sting which pierces the damned : so much of the spiritual fire, which will burn up the wicked ;—so much of the never dying worm, which will prey upon them :—so much of the dreadful instrument which will rack them ;—so much of Satan's image, which will frighten them ;—so much of the characteristic by which the devil's children shall be distinguished from the children of God ;—so much of the black mark whereby the goats shall be separated from the sheep. To plead therefore for the continuance of indwelling sin, is no better than to plead for keeping in your hearts one of the sharpest stings of death, and one of the hottest coals in hell-fire. On the other hand, to attain Christian perfection is to have the last feature of Belial's image erased from your loving souls, the last bit of the sting of death extracted from your composed breasts, and the last spark of hell fire extinguished in your peaceful bosoms. It is to enter into the spiritual rest which remains on earth for the people of God ; a delightful rest this, where your soul will enjoy a calm in the midst of outward storms ; and where your spirit will no longer be tossed by the billows of swelling pride, dissatisfied avarice, pining envy, disappointed hopes, fruitless cares, dubious anxiety, turbulent anger, fretting impatience, and racking unbelief. It is to enjoy that even state of mind, in which all things will work together for your good. There your love will bear its excellent fruits during the sharpest winter of affliction, as well as in the finest summer of prosperity. There you will be more and more settled in peaceful humility. There you will continually grow in a holy familiarity with the Friend of penitent sinners ; and your prospect of eternal felicity will brighten every day.*

Innumerable are the advantages which established, perfect Christians, have over carnal, unsettled believers, who continue sold under indwelling sin. And will ye despise those blessings to your dying

* If the arguments and expostulations contained in these sheets be rational and scriptural ; is not Mr. Wesley in the right, when he says, that " All preachers should make a point of preaching perfection to believers, constantly, strongly, and explicitly : " and that " All believers should mind this one thing, and continually agonize for it ? " And do not all the ministers, who preach against Christian perfection, preach against the perfection of Christianity, oppose holiness, resist the sanctifying truth as it is in Jesus, recommend an unscriptural purgatory, plead for sin, instead of striving against it, and delude imperfect Christians into Laodicean ease ?

day, O ye prejudiced imperfectionists ? Will ye secure to yourselves the contrary curses ? Nay, will ye entail them upon the generations which are yet unborn, by continuing to print, preach, or argue for the continuance of indwelling sin, the capital wo belonging to the devil and his angels ! God forbid ! We hope better things from you ; not doubting but the error of several of you lies chiefly in your judgment, and springs from a misunderstanding of the question, rather than from a malicious opposition to that *holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. With pleasure we remember, and follow St. Jude's loving direction : *of some [the simple-hearted, who are seduced into Antinomianism,] have compassion, making a difference ; and others [the bigots and obstinate seducers, who wilfully shut their eyes against the truth] save with fear : hating even the garment spotted by the flesh :* although they will not be ashamed to plead for the continuance of a defiling fountain of carnality in the very hearts of all God's people. We are fully persuaded, my dear brethren, that we should wrong you, if we did not acknowledge that many of you have a sincere desire to be saved by Christ into all purity of heart and life ; and with regard to such imperfectionists, our chief complaint is, that their desire is *not according to knowledge*.

If others of you, of a different stamp, should laugh at these pages ; and [still producing banter instead of argument] should continue to say, " Where are your *perfect* Christians ? Show us but one, and we will believe your doctrine of perfection : " I shall just put them in mind of St. Peter's awful prophecy : *Know this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own [indwelling] lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his spiritual coming [to make an end of sin, thoroughly to purge his floor, and to burn the chaff with unquenchable fire ?] For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning :* all believers are still carnal and sold under sin, as well as father Paul. — And if such mockers continue to display their prejudice by such taunts, I shall take the liberty to show them their own picture, by pointing at those prejudiced professors of old, who said, concerning the most perfect of all the perfect, " What sign showest thou, that we may receive thy doctrine ? Come down from the cross, and we will believe." O the folly and danger of such scoffs ! " Blessed is he that sitteth not in the seat of the scornful, and maketh much of them that fear the Lord." Yea, he is blessed next to them " that are undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord, keep his testimonies, and seek him with their whole heart," Psal. cxix. 1, 2.

Should ye ask : “ To what purpose do you make all this ado about Christian perfection ? Do those who maintain this doctrine live more holy and useful lives than other believers ? ” I answer :

1. Every thing being equal, they undoubtedly do, if they hold not the truth in unrighteousness ; for the best principles, when they are cordially embraced, will always produce the best practices. — But alas ! too many merely contend for Christian perfection in a speculative, systematical manner. They recommend it to others with their lips, as a point of doctrine which makes a part of their religious system, instead of following after it with their hearts, as a blessing which they must attain, if they will not be found as unprepared for judgment as the foolish virgins. These perfectionists are, so far, hypocrites ; nor should their fatal inconsistency make us despise the truth which they contend for, any more than the conduct of thousands, who contend for the truth of the Scriptures, while they live in full opposition to the Scriptures, ought to make us despise the Bible.

2. On the other hand, some gracious persons [like the pious and *inconsistent Antinomians* whom I have described in the preceding Checks] speak against Christian perfection with their lips, but cannot help following hard after it with their hearts ; and while they do so, they sometimes attain the *thing*, although they continue to quarrel with the *name*. These perfect imperfectionists undoubtedly adorn the Gospel of Christ far more than the imperfect, hypocritical perfectionists, whom I have just described ! and God, who looks at the simplicity of the heart more than at the consistency of the judgment, pities their mistakes, and accepts their works.

But 3. Some there are, who both maintain, doctrinally and practically, the necessity of a perfect devotedness of ourselves to God. They hold the truth, and they hold it in wisdom and righteousness ; their tempers and conduct enforce it, as well as their words and profession. And, on this account, they have a great advantage over the two preceding classes of professors. Reason and Revelation jointly crown the orthodoxy and faithfulness of these *perfect perfectionists*, who neither strengthen the hands of the wicked, nor excite the wonder of the judicious, by absurdly pleading for indwelling sin with their lips, while they strive to work righteousness with their hands and hearts. If ye candidly weigh this three-fold distinction, I doubt not but ye will blame the *irrational* inconsistency of *holy imperfectionists*, condemning the *immoral* inconsistency of *unholy perfectionists*, and agree with me, that the most excellent Christian is a *consistent, holy perfectionist*.

And now, my dear, mistaken brethren, take in good part these plain solutions, expostulations, and reproofs : and give glory to God by believing that he *can* and *will* yet save you to the uttermost from your evil tempers, if ye humbly come to him by Christ. Day and night ask of him the new heart, which *keeps the commandments* ; and when ye shall have received it, if you keep it with all diligence, sin shall no more pollute it than it polluted our Lord's soul, when he said, *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love ; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* Burn, in the mean time, the unhallowed pens, and bridle the rash tongues with which ye have pleaded for the continuance of sin till death. Honour us with the right hand of fellowship ; and like reconciled brethren, let us at every opportunity lovingly fall upon our knees together, to implore the help of Him, who *can do far exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.* Nor let us give him any rest, till he has perfected all our souls in the *charity which rejoiceth in the truth* without prejudice, in the obedience which keeps the commandments without reserve, and in the perseverance which finds that *in keeping of them there is great reward.*

Nothing but such a conduct as this can remove the stumbling-blocks which the contentions ye breed have laid in the way of a deistical world. When the men, whom your mistakes have hardened, shall see that you listen to Scripture and reason, who knows but their prejudices may subside, and some of them may yet say, " See the good which arises from friendly controversy ! See how these Christians desire to be *perfected in one* ? They now understand one another. Babylonish confusion is at an end ; evangelical truth prevails ; and love, the most delicious fruit of truth, visibly grows to Christian perfection."—God grant that, through the concurrence of your candour, this may soon be the language of all those whom the bigotry of professors has confirmed in their prejudices against Christianity.

Should this plain address so far influence you, my dear brethren, as to abate the force of your aversion to the doctrine of *pure love*, or to stagger your unaccountable faith in a *death purgatory* ; and should you seriously ask which is the way to Christian perfection, I entreat you to pass on to the next section, where I hope you will find a scriptural answer to some important questions, which, I trust, a few of you are by this time ready to propose.

SECTION XIX.

An Address to Imperfect Believers, who cordially embrace the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

YOUR regard for Scripture and Reason, and your desire to answer the ends of God's predestination, by being conformed to the image of his Son, have happily kept or reclaimed you from the Antinomianism exposed in these sheets.

Ye see the absolute necessity of personally fulfilling the law of Christ; your bosom glows with desire to perfect holiness in the fear of God; and far from blushing to be called Perfectionists, ye openly assert that a perfect faith, productive of perfect love to God and man, is the pearl of great price for which you are determined to sell all, and which (next to Christ) you will seek early and late, as the one thing needful for your spiritual and eternal welfare. Some directions, therefore, about the manner of seeking this pearl, cannot but be acceptable to you, if they are scriptural and rational; and such, I humbly trust, are those which follow.

I. First, if ye would attain an evangelically sinless perfection, let your full assent to the truth of that deep doctrine firmly stand upon the evangelical foundation of a precept and a promise. A precept without a promise would not sufficiently animate you: nor would a promise without a precept properly bind you; but a divine precept and a divine promise form an unshaken foundation. Let then your faith deliberately rest her right foot upon these precepts.

Hear, O Israel—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, Deut. vi. 5.—Thou shalt not hate thy neighbour in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people: but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord; ye shall keep my statutes. Lev. xix. 17, 18. And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord God, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good, &c. ? Circumcise therefore, the fore-skin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked, Deut. 10, 12, &c.—

Serve God with a perfect heart, and a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imaginations of the thoughts.
1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

Should unbelief suggest that these are only Old Testament injunctions, trample upon the false suggestion, and rest the same foot of your faith upon the following New Testament precepts, *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.—I say unto you, Love your enemies: bless them that curse you: do good to them that hate you, &c. that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, &c. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* Matt. v. 17, 44, &c.—*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Matt. xix. 17.—*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.* Gal. vi. 2.—*This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.* John xv. 12.—*He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: for this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c. Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill, &c. therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom. xiii. 8, 10. *This commandment we have from him, that he who loves God love his brother also.* 1 John iv. 21. *If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.* Jam. ii. 8, 9.—*Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing [comparatively speaking] but [under Christ] the keeping of the commandments of God [is the one thing needful.]* 1 Cor. vii. 19. *For, The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* 1 Tim. i. 5. *Though I have all faith, &c. and have not charity, I am nothing.* 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *Whosoever shall keep the whole law [of liberty] and yet offend in one point, [in uncharitable respect of persons,] he is guilty of all, &c. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty, [which requires perfect love, and therefore makes no allowance for the least degree of uncharitableness.]* James ii. 10, 12.

When the right foot of your faith stands on these evangelical precepts and proclamations, lest she should stagger for want of a promise every way adequate to such weighty commandments, let her place her left foot upon the following promises, which are extracted from the Old Testament. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.* Deut. xxx. 6. *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God [in a new*

and peculiar manner] for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.—This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jer. xxiv. 7.—xxx. 33. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. Ezek. xxv. 27.

And let nobody suppose that the promises of the *circumcision of the heart*, the *cleansing*, the *clean water*, and the *Spirit*, which are mentioned in these scriptures, and by which the hearts of believers are to be made *new*, and God's law is to be so written therein, that they shall keep his judgments and do them:—Let none, I say, suppose that these glorious promises belong only to the Jews; for their full accomplishment peculiarly refers to the Christian dispensation. Besides, if *sprinklings of the Spirit* were sufficient, under the *Jewish* dispensation, to raise the plant of *Jewish* perfection in *Jewish* believers; how much more will the revelation of the *horn of our salvation*, and the *outpourings* of the Spirit, raise the plant of *Christian* perfection in faithful, Christian believers! And, that this revelation of Christ, in the Spirit, as well as in the flesh, these effusions of the water of life, these baptisms of fire which burn up the chaff of sin, thoroughly purge God's spiritual floor, save us from all our uncleannesses, and deliver us from all our enemies;—that these blessings, I say, are *peculiarly* promised to Christians, is demonstrable by the following cloud of New Testament declarations and promises.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath—raised up an horn of salvation for us,—as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets,—that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without [unbelieving] fear, [that is, with perfect love,] in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life, Luke i. 68, 75.—Blessed are the poor in spirit, who thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Matt. v. 3, 6.—If thou knewest the gift of God, &c. thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water:—And the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life, John iv. 10, 14. Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, [when I shall have ascended up on high to receive gifts for men] out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water [to cleanse

his soul, and to keep it clean.] *But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given [in such a manner as to raise the plant of Christian perfection] because Jesus was not yet glorified, and his spiritual dispensation was not yet fully opened. John vii. 37, &c.*" Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, has published some excellent queries, and proposed them to those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life. They are close to the point, and therefore the two first attack the Imperfectionists from the very ground on which I want you to stand. They run thus: "1. Has there not been a larger measure of the Holy Spirit given under the Gospel, than under the Jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was the Spirit not given before Christ was glorified? John vii. 39.—2. Was that glory which followed the sufferings of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 11. an external glory, or an internal, viz. the glory of holiness?" Always rest the doctrine of Christian perfection on this scriptural foundation, and it will stand as firm as revelation itself.

It is allowed on all sides, that the dispensation of John the Baptist exceeded that of the other prophets, because it immediately introduced the Gospel of Christ, and because John was not only appointed to *preach the baptism of repentance*, but also clearly to point out the very person of Christ, and to *give knowledge of salvation to God's people by the remission of sins*, Luke i. 77. and nevertheless, John only promised the blessing of the Spirit, which Christ bestowed when he had received gifts for men. *I indeed*, said John, *baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I,—He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Matt. iii. 11. Such is the importance of this promise, that it is particularly recorded not only by the three other evangelists [see Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. and John i. 26.] but also by our Lord himself, who said just before his ascension, *John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Acts i. 5.*

So capital is this promise of the Spirit's stronger influences to raise the rare plant of Christian perfection, that when our Lord speaks of this promise, he emphatically calls it *The promise of the Father*; because it shines among the other promises of the Gospel of Christ, as the moon does among the stars. Thus, Acts i. 4. *Wait*, says he, *for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me.* And again, Luke xxiv. 49. *Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you.* Agreeably to this, St. Peter says, *Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this:—He has begun abundantly to fulfil that which*

was spoken by the prophet Joel, *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out [bestow a more abundant measure] of my Spirit upon all flesh.—Therefore repent and be baptized [i. e. make an open profession of your faith] in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call [to enjoy the full blessings of the Christian dispensation,] Acts ii. 17, 33, 38.* This promise, when it is received in its fulness, is undoubtedly the greatest of all the exceeding great and precious promises, which are given to us, that by them you might be partakers of the divine nature [that is, of pure love and unmixed holiness] 2 Pet. i. 4. Have therefore a peculiar eye to it, and to these deep words of our Lord, *I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth [and power] whom the world knows not, &c. but ye know him, for he remaineth with you, and shall be in you.—At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you:—For, “If any man, i. e. any believer, love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him, John xiv. 15, 23: “Which,” says Mr. Wesley, in his note on the place, “implies such a large manifestation of the divine presence and love, that the former, in justification, is as nothing in comparison of it.”* Agreeable to this, the same judicious divine expresses himself thus in another of his publications: “These virtues [meekness, humility, and true resignation to God] are the only wedding garment; they are the lamps and vessels well furnished with oil. There is nothing that will do instead of them; they must have their full and perfect work in you, or the soul can never be delivered from its fallen, wrathful state. There is no possibility of salvation but in this. And when the Lamb of God has brought forth his own meekness, &c. in our souls, then are our lamps trimmed, and our virgin hearts made ready for the marriage feast. This marriage feast signifies the entrance into the highest state of union that can be between God and the soul in this life. This birthday of the spirit of love in our souls, whenever we attain it, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God, as will blot out the remembrance of every thing that we called peace or joy before.”

To make you believe this important promise with more ardour, consider that our Lord spent some of his last moments in sealing it with his powerful intercession. After having prayed the Father to sanctify his disciples through the truth, firmly embraced by their faith, and powerfully applied by his Spirit, he adds, *Neither pray I for*

these alone, but for them who will believe on me through their word. And what is it that our Lord asks for these believers? Truly, what St. Paul asked for the imperfect believers at Corinth, *even their perfection*, 2 Cor. xiii. 9. A state of soul this, which Christ describes thus : *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be made one in us, &c. that they may be one, as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one, and that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me*, John xvii. 17, 23. Our Lord could not pray in vain : it is not to be supposed that the Scriptures are silent with respect to the effect of this solemn prayer, an answer to which was to give the world an *idea* of the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven—a *specimen* of the power which introduces believers into the state of Christian perfection ; and therefore we read, that on the day of Pentecost the kingdom of Satan was powerfully shaken, and the kingdom of God, *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, began to come with a new power : then were thousands wonderfully converted, and clearly justified : then was the kingdom of heaven taken by force ; and the love of Christ, and of the brethren, began to burn the chaff of selfishness and sin with a force which the world had never seen before. See Acts ii. 42, &c.—Some time after, another glorious baptism, or capital outpouring of the Spirit, carried the disciples of Christ farther into the kingdom of grace, which perfects believers in one. And therefore we find that the account which St. Luke gives us of them after this second capital manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in a great degree answers to our Lord's prayer for their perfection. He had asked *that they all might be one—that they might be one as the Father and he are one*, and that they might be perfected in one, John xvii. 17, &c. And now a fuller answer is given to his deep request. Take it in the words of an inspired historian : *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were [once more] filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with [still greater] boldness ; and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul ; neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed were his own ; but they had all things common, &c. and great grace was upon them all*, Acts iv. 31, 33. Who does not see in this account a *specimen* of that grace which our Lord had asked for believers, when he had prayed that his disciples, and those who would believe on him through their word, might be *perfected in one* ?

It may be asked here, whether the multitude of them that believed, in those happy days, were *all* perfect in love ? I answer, that if pure

love had cast out *all* selfishness and sinful fear from their hearts, they were undoubtedly *made perfect in love*; but as God does not *usually* remove the plague of indwelling sin till it has been discovered and lamented; and as we find in the two next chapters an account of the *guile* of Ananias and his wife, and of the *partiality* or selfish *murmuring* of some believers, it seems that those chiefly, who before were strong in the grace of their dispensation, arose *then* into sinless fathers; and that the first love of other believers, through the peculiar blessing of Christ upon his infant church, was so bright and powerful for a time, that *little children* had, or seemed to have, the strength of *young men*, and young men the grace of *fathers*. And, in this case, the account which St. Luke gives of the primitive believers, ought to be taken with some restriction. Thus, while *many* of them were perfect in love, *many* might have the imperfection of their love only covered over by a land flood of peace and joy in believing. And in this case, what is said of their being *all of one heart and mind*, and of their *having all things common*, &c. may only mean, that the harmony of love had not yet been broken, and that none had yet betrayed any of the uncharitableness for which Christians in after ages became so conspicuous. With respect to the *great grace* which *was upon them all*, this does not necessarily mean that they were all *equally* strong in grace, for *great* unity and happiness may rest upon a whole family, where the difference between a *father*, ■ *young man*, and a *child*, continues to subsist. However, it is not improbable, that God, to open the dispensation of the *Spirit* in a manner which might fix the attention of all ages upon its importance and glory, permitted the whole body of believers to take an *extraordinary* turn together into the Canaan of perfect love, and to show the world the admirable fruit which grows there, as the spies sent by *Joshua* took a turn into the good land of promise before they were settled in it, and brought from thence the bunch of grapes, which astonished, and spirited up the Israelites, who had not yet crossed Jordan.

Upon the whole, it is, I think, undeniable, from the four first chapters of the Acts, that a peculiar power of the Spirit is bestowed upon believers under the Gospel of Christ; that this power, through faith on our part, can operate the most sudden and surprising change in our souls; and that, when our faith shall *fully* embrace the promise of *full* sanctification, or of a complete *circumcision of the heart in the Spirit*, the Holy Ghost, who kindled so much love on the day of Pentecost, that all the primitive believers *loved*, or *seemed* to love, each other *perfectly*, will not fail to help us to *love one another* without sinful

self-seeking ; and as soon as we do so, *God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* 1 John iv. 12.—John xiv. 23.

Should you ask, how many baptisms, or effusions of the sanctifying Spirit are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin, and to kindle his soul into perfect love : I reply, that the effect of a sanctifying truth depending upon the *ardour* of the faith with which that truth is embraced, and upon the power of the Spirit with which it is applied, I should betray a want of modesty, if I brought the operations of the Holy Ghost, and the energy of faith, under a rule which is not expressly laid down in the Scriptures. If you ask your physician, how many doses of physic you must take before all the crudities of your stomach can be carried off, and your appetite perfectly restored, he would probably answer you, that this depends upon the nature of those crudities, the strength of the medicine, and the manner in which your constitution will allow it to operate ; and that, in general, you must repeat the dose, as you can bear, till the remedy has fully answered the desired end. I return a similar answer : If one powerful baptism of the Spirit *seal you unto the day of redemption, and cleanse you from all [moral] filthiness*, so much the better. If two or more be necessary, the Lord can repeat them : *his arm is not shortened that it cannot save* : nor is his promise of the Spirit stinted : he says in general, *Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.*—If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children : how much more will your heavenly Father [who is goodness itself] give his holy [sanctifying] Spirit to them that ask him ! I may however venture to say in general, that before we can rank among perfect Christians, we must receive so much of the truth and Spirit of Christ by faith, as to have the pure love of God and man shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and to be filled with the meek and lowly mind which was in Christ. And if one outpouring of the Spirit, one bright manifestation of the sanctifying truth, so empties us of self, as to fill us with the *mind of Christ*, and with *pure love*, we are undoubtedly Christians in the full sense of the word. From the ground of my soul, I therefore subscribe to the answer which a great Divine makes to the following objection :

“ But some who are newly justified do come up to this [*Christian perfection* :] What then will you say to these ? ”—Mr. Wesley replies with great propriety : “ If they really do, I will say, they are sanctified, saved from sin *in that moment* ; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more. But certainly this is an exempt case. It is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified. They feel in themselves, more or less, pride, anger, self-

will, and a heart bent to backsliding. An till they have gradually mortified these, they are fully renewed in love! God usually gives a considerable time for men to receive *light*, to grow in *grace*, to do and suffer his will before they are either justified or sanctified. But he does not invariably adhere to this. Sometimes he *cuts short his work*. He does the work of many years in a few weeks: perhaps in a week, a day, an hour. He justifies or sanctifies both those who have *done or suffered* nothing, and who have not had *time* for a gradual growth either in *light* or *grace*. And may he not do what he *will with his own*? Is *thine eye evil, because he is good*? It need not therefore be proved by forty texts of Scripture, either that most men are perfected in love *at last*, or that there is a gradual work of God in the soul; and that, generally speaking, it is a *long time*, even many years, before sin is destroyed. All this we know. But we know likewise, that God *may*, with man's good leave, *cut short his work*, in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. He does so in many instances. And yet there is a gradual work both *before* and *after* that moment. So that one may affirm, the work is *gradual*; another, it is *instantaneous*, without any manner of contradiction." *Plain Account*; page 115, &c. Page 155, the same eminent divine explains himself more fully, thus: "It [Christian perfection] is constantly preceded and followed by a *gradual work*. But is it in itself *instantaneous* or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step. An *instantaneous* change has been wrought in some believers: none can deny this. Since that change they enjoy *perfect love*. They feel this, and this alone. They rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks. Now this is all that I mean by *perfection*. Therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach.—'But in some this change was not instantaneous.'—They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought: it is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies. Yet there is an instant in which life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.—'But if they have this love now, they will lose it.'—They may; but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it *now*: they *now* experience what we teach. They *now* are *all love*. They *now* rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing.—'However, sin is only *suspended* in them; it is not *destroyed*.'—Call it which you please. They are *all love* to-day: and they take no thought for the morrow." —To return: .

2. When you firmly assent to the truth of the *precepts* and *promises*, on which the doctrine of Christian perfection is founded:—

when you understand the meaning of these scriptures, *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth—I will send the Comforter, [the Spirit of truth and holiness] unto you; God hath chosen you to [eternal] salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:—* When you see that the way to Christian perfection is by the word of the Gospel of Christ,—by *faith*—and by the *Spirit* of God: in the next place get tolerably clear ideas of *this* perfection. This is absolutely necessary. If you will hit a mark, you must know where it is. Some people aim at *Christian perfection*: but mistaking it for *angelical perfection*, they shoot above the mark, miss it, and then peevishly give up their hopes. Others place the mark as much too low: hence it is that you hear them profess to have attained Christian perfection, when they have not so much as attained the mental serenity of a philosopher, or the candour of a good-natured, conscientious heathen. In the preceding pages, if I am not mistaken, the mark is fixed according to the rules of scriptural moderation. It is not placed *so high*, as to make you despair of hitting it, if you do your best in an evangelical manner: nor yet *so low*, as to allow you to presume, that you can reach it, without exerting all your abilities to the uttermost, in due subordination to the efficacy of Jesus's blood, and the Spirit's sanctifying influences.

3. Should you ask, “Which is the way to Christian perfection? Shall we go on to it by internal stillness, agreeably to this direction of Moses and David, *The Lord will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace; stand still and see the salvation of God.—Be still, and know that I am God.—Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still?* Or shall we press after it by an internal wrestling, according to these commands of Christ—*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, &c.*

According to the evangelical balance of the doctrines of *free grace* and *free will*, I answer that the way to perfection is by the due combination of *prevenient, assisting free grace*; and of *submissive, assisted free will*. Antinomian stillness, therefore, which says that *free grace* must do all, is not the way. Pharisaic activity, which will do most, if not all, is not the way. Join these two partial systems; allowing *free grace* the lead and high pre-eminence which it so justly claims; and you have the balance of the two Gospel axioms. You do justice to the doctrines of *mercy* and *justice*—of *free grace* and *free will*—of *divine faithfulness* in keeping the covenant of grace, and of *human faithfulness* in laying hold on that covenant, and keeping within its

bounds :—In short, you have the Scripture method of waiting upon God, which Mr. *Wesley* describes thus :

*Restless, resign'd for God, I wait :
For God my vehement soul stands still.*

To understand these lines, consider that *faith*, like the Virgin Mary, is alternately a *receiver* and a *bestower* : first, it *passively receives* the impregnation of divine grace, saying, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord : let it be done to me according to thy word* ; and then, it *actively* brings forth its heavenly fruit with earnest labour.—*God worketh in you to will and to do*, says St. Paul : here he describes the *passive* office of faith, which submits to, and acquiesces in, every dispensation and operation.—*Therefore work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, and of consequence, with haste, diligence, ardour, and faithfulness : here the apostle describes the *active* office of that mother grace, which carefully lays out the talent she has already received. Would ye then wait aright for Christian perfection ? Impartially admit the Gospel axioms, and faithfully reduce them to practice. In order to this, let them meet in your hearts, as the two legs of a pair of compasses meet in the rivet, which makes them one compounded instrument. Let your faith in the doctrine of *free grace*, and Christ's righteousness, fix your mind upon God, as you fix one of the legs of your compasses immoveably in the centre of the circle, which you are about to draw : so shall you *stand still* according to the first texts produced in the question. And then, let your faith in the doctrine of *free will*, and evangelical *obedience*, make you steadily run the circle of duty around that firm centre ; so shall you imitate the other leg of the compasses which evenly moves around the centre, and traces the circumference of a perfect circle. By this activity, subordinate to grace, you will *take the kingdom of heaven by force*. When your heart quietly rests in God by faith, as it steadily acts the part of a *passive receiver*, it resembles the leg of the compasses which rests in the centre of the circle ; and then the poet's expressions, *restless—resigned*, describe its fixedness in God. But when your heart swiftly moves towards God by faith as it acts the part of a *diligent worker*—when your ardent soul follows after God as a thirsty deer does after the water brooks, it may be compared to the leg of the compasses which traces the circumference of the circle ; and then, these words of the poet, *restless* and *vehement*, properly belong to it. To go on steadily to perfection, you must therefore endeavour steadily to *believe*, according to the doctrine of the first Gospel axiom ; and [as there is opportunity] *diligently* to work, according to the doctrine

of the second : and the moment your faith is steadily fixed in God as in your centre, and your obedience swiftly moves in the circle of duty from the rest and power which you find in that centre you have attained ; you are made perfect in the faith which works by love. Your humble faith saves you from Pharisaism, your obedient love from Antinomianism, and both, in due subordination to Christ, constitute you a just man made perfect, according to your dispensation."

4. Another question has also puzzled many sincere Perfectionists, and the solution of it may remove a considerable hinderance out of your way. "Is Christian perfection, say they, to be *instantaneously* brought down to us?—Or are we gradually to grow up to it?—Shall we be made perfect in love by a habit of holiness suddenly infused into us, or by acts of feeble faith and feeble love so frequently repeated as to become strong, habitual, and evangelically natural to us, according to the well-known maxim, *A strong habit is a second nature?*"

Both ways are good: and instances of some believers *gradually* perfected, and of others [comparatively speaking] *instantaneously* fixed in perfect love, might probably be produced, if we were acquainted with the experiences of *all* those who have died in a state of evangelical perfection. It may be with the root of sin, as it is with its fruit: some souls parley many years, before they can be persuaded to give up *all* their outward sins, and others part with them, as it were, *instantaneously*. You may compare the former to those besieged towns who make a long resistance, or to those mothers who go through a tedious and lingering labour; and the latter resemble those fortresses which are surprised and carried by storm; or those women who are delivered almost as soon as labour comes upon them. Travellers inform us that vegetation is so quick and powerful in some warm climates, that the seeds of some vegetables yield a sallad in less than twenty four hours. Should a northern philosopher say, Impossible! and should an English gardener exclaim against such *mushroom sallad*, they would only expose their prejudices, as do those who decry instantaneous justification, or mock at the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of indwelling sin.

For where is the absurdity of this doctrine? If the light of a candle brought into a dark room can instantly expel the darkness; and if, upon opening your shutters at noon, your gloomy apartment can *instantaneously* be filled with meridian light; why might not the instantaneous rending of the vail of unbelief, or the sudden and full opening of your faith, instantly fill your soul with the light of truth, and the fire of love; supposing the Sun of Righteousness arise upon

you with powerful healing in his wings? May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul, as quickly as the Spirit descended upon your Lord at his baptism? Did it not descend *as a dove*, that is, with the soft motion of a dove, which swiftly shoots down, and instantly lights? A good man said once with truth, "A mote is little when it is compared to the sun, but I am far less before God." Alluding to this comparison, I ask, If the sun could instantly kindle a mote; nay, if a burning-glass can in a moment calcine a bone, and turn a stone to lime; and if the dim flame of a candle can in the twinkling of an eye destroy the flying insect which comes within its sphere, how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose, that, when God fully baptizes a soul with his sanctifying Spirit and with the celestial fire of his love, he cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure seraphic love.

An appeal to parallel cases may throw some light upon the question which I answer. If you were sick, and asked of God the perfect recovery of your health, how would you look for it? Would you expect to have your strength restored to you at *once*, without any external means, as the lepers who were instantly cleansed: and as the paralytic, who, at our Lord's word, took up the bed upon which he lay, and carried it away upon his shoulders? Or by using some external means of a slower operation, as the *ten lepers* did, who were more *gradually cleansed, as they went to show themselves to the priests*? Or as king Hezekiah, whose gradual but equally sure recovery, was owing to God's blessing upon the poultice of figs prescribed by Isaiah? Again—If you were blind, and besought the Lord to give you perfect human sight; how should you wait for it? As Bartimeus, whose eyes were opened in an instant? Or as the man who received his sight by degrees? At first he saw nothing; by and by he confusedly discovered the objects before him, but at last he saw all things clearly. Would ye not earnestly wait for an answer to your prayers *now*—leaving to divine wisdom the particular manner of your recovery? And why should ye not go and do likewise, with respect to the dreadful disorder which we call indwelling sin?

If our hearts be purified by faith, as the Scriptures expressly testify;—if the *faith*, which peculiarly purifies the hearts of Christians, be a faith in the *promise of the Father*, which promise was made by the Son, and directly points at a peculiar effusion of the Holy Ghost, the purifier of spirits;—if we may believe in a moment;—and if God may in a moment seal our sanctifying faith by sending us a fulness

of his sanctifying Spirit ;—if this, I say, may be the case, does it not follow, that to deny the possibility of the *instantaneous* destruction of sin ; is to deny, [contrary to Scripture and matter of fact] that we can make an *instantaneous* act of faith in the sanctifying promise of the Father, and in the all-cleansing blood of the Son, and that God can seal that act by the instantaneous operation of his Spirit ? which St. Paul calls *the circumcision of the heart in [or by] the Spirit*, according to the Lord's ancient promise, *I will circumcise thy heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*. Where is the absurdity of believing that *the God of all grace* can give an answer to the poet's rational and evangelical request,

Open my faith's interior eye :
 Display thy glory from above :
 And sinful self shall sink and die,
 Lost in astonishment and love ?

If a momentary display of Christ's bodily glory could in an instant turn *Saul*, the blaspheming, bloody persecutor, into *Paul*, the praying, gentle apostle ;—if a sudden sight of Christ's hands, could in a moment root up from *Thomas's* heart that detestable resolution, *I will not believe*, and produce that deep confession of faith, *My Lord, and my God !* what cannot the display of Christ's spiritual glory operate in a believing soul, to which he manifests himself according to that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself ? Again : if Christ's body could in an instant become so glorious on the mount, that his very garments partook of the sudden irradiation, became not only free from every spot, but also *white as the light*,—*shining exceeding white as snow* ; so as no fuller on the earth could whiten them ; and if our bodies shall be changed—if this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and if this mortal shall put on immortality, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; why may not our believing souls, when they fully submit to God's terms, be fully changed—fully turned from the power of Satan unto God ? When the Holy Ghost says, Now is the day of salvation, does he exclude salvation from heart iniquity ?—If Christ now deserves *fully* the name of *Jesus*, because he [fully] saves his believing people from their sins : and if now the Gospel trumpet sounds, and sinners arise from the dead, why should we not, upon the performance of the condition, be changed in a moment from indwelling sin to indwelling holiness ? Why should we not pass, in the twinkling of an eye, or in a short time, from indwelling death to indwelling life ?

This is not all. If you deny the possibility of a quick destruction of indwelling sin, you send to hell, or to some unscriptural purgatory, not only the dying thief, but also all those martyrs who suddenly embraced the Christian faith, and were instantly put to death by bloody persecutors, for confessing the faith which they had just embraced. And if you allow that God may *cut his work short in righteousness* in such case, why not in other cases? Why not, especially when ■ believer confesses his indwelling sin, ardently prays that Christ would, and sincerely believes that Christ *can, now cleanse him from all unrighteousness*?

Nobody ■ so apt to laugh at the *instantaneous* destruction of sin as the Calvinists, and yet [such is the inconsistency which characterizes some men!] their doctrine of purgatory is built upon it. For, if you credit them, all dying believers have a nature which is *still morally corrupted*, and ■ heart which is *yet desperately wicked*. These believers, still full of indwelling sin, instantaneously breathe out their last, and without any peculiar act of faith, without any peculiar outpouring of the sanctifying Spirit, corruption is instantaneously gone. The indwelling *man of sin* has passed through the Geneva purgatory; he is entirely consumed! And behold! the souls which would not hear of the instantaneous act of sanctifying faith which receives the *indwelling* Spirit of holiness—the souls which pleaded hard for the continuance of indwelling sin, are now completely sinless; and in the twinkling of an eye, they appear in the third heaven among the spirits of just Christians made perfect in love! Such is the doctrine of our opponents: and yet they think it incredible that God should do for us, while we pray in faith, what they suppose death will do for them, when they lie in his cold arms, perhaps delirious or senseless!

On the other hand, to deny that imperfect believers may, and do gradually grow in grace, and of course that the remains of their sins may, and do gradually decay, is as absurd as to deny that God waters the earth by daily dews, as well as by thunder showers;—it is as ridiculous as to assert that nobody is carried off by lingering disorders, but that all men die suddenly, or a few hours after they are taken ill.

I use these comparisons about death to throw some light upon the question which I solve, and not to insinuate that the decay and destruction of sin run parallel with the decay and dissolution of the body, and that, of course, sin must end with our bodily life. Were I to admit this unscriptural tenet, I should build again what I have all along endeavoured to destroy, and, as I love consistency, I should promise eternal salvation to all unbelievers; for unbelievers, I pre-

sume, will die, i. e. go into the Geneva purgatory, as well as believers. Nor do I see why death should not be able to destroy the *van* and the *main body* of sin's forces, if it can so readily cut the *rear* [the remains of sin] in pieces.

From the preceding observations it appears, that believers generally go on to Christian perfection, as the disciples went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. They toiled some time very hard and with little success. But after they had rowed *about twenty-five, or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He said to them, It is I, be not afraid; then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.* Just so, we toil till our faith discovers Christ in the promise, and welcomes him into our hearts; and such is the effect of his presence, that immediately we arrive at the land of perfection.—Or, to use another illustration, God says to believers, Go to the Canaan of perfect love: arise, why do ye tarry? Wash away the remains of sin, calling, i. e. believing on the name of the Lord. And if they submit to the obedience of faith, he deals with them as he did with the evangelist Philip, to whom he had said, *Arise and go towards the south.* For when they arise and run, as Philip did, *the Spirit of the Lord takes them as he did the evangelist; and they are found in the new Jerusalem, as Philip was found at Azotus. They dwell in God [or in perfect love] and God [or perfect love] dwells in them.*

Hence it follows, that the most evangelical method of following after the perfection to which we are immediately called, is that of seeking it *now*, by endeavouring *fully* to lay hold on the promise of that perfection through faith, just as if our repeated acts of obedience could never help us forward. But in the mean time we should do the works of faith, and repeat our internal and external acts of obedience with as much earnestness, and faithfulness, according to our present power, as if we were sure to enter into rest merely by a diligent use of our talents, and a faithful exertion of the powers which divine grace has bestowed upon us. If we do not attend to the first of these directions, we shall seek to be sanctified by works like the Pharisees; and if we disregard the second, we shall fall into Solifidian sloth with the Antinomians.

This double direction is founded upon the connexion of the two Gospel axioms. If the second axiom, which implies the doctrine of free will, were false, I would only say: "Be still, or rather do nothing: free grace alone will do all in you and for you." But as this axiom is as true as the first, I must add, "*Strive in humble subordination to free grace: for Christ saith, To him that hath initiating*

grace to purpose, more grace *shall be given, and he shall have abundance*: his faithful and equitable Benefactor will give him the reward of *perfecting* grace.

5. Beware therefore of unscriptural refinements. Set out for the Canaan of perfect love with a firm resolution to labour for the rest which remains on earth for the people of God. Some good, mistaken men, wise above what is written, and fond of striking out paths, which were unknown to the apostles,—new paths marked out by voluntary humility, and leading to Antinomianism;—some people of that stamp, I say, have made it their business, from the days of heated Augustin, to decry making resolutions. They represent this practice as a branch of what they are pleased to call *legality*. They insinuate that it is utterly inconsistent with the knowledge of our inconstancy and weakness: in a word, they frighten us from the first step to Christian perfection:—from an humble, evangelical determination to run, till we reach the prize, or, if you please, to go down till we come to the lowest place. It may not be amiss to point out the ground of their mistake. Once they broke the balance of the Gospel axioms by leaning too much towards *free will*, and by not laying their *first* and *principal* stress upon *free grace*. God, to bring them to the evangelical mean, refused his blessing to their *unevangelical* willing and running; hence it is, that their self-righteous resolutions started aside like a broken bow. When they found out their mistake, instead of coming back to the line of moderation, they fled to the other extreme. Casting all their weights into the scale of *free grace*, they absurdly formed a resolution never to form a resolution; and, determining not to throw one determination into the scale of *free will*, they began to draw all the believers they met with into the ditch of a slothful quietism, and Laodicean stillness.

You will never steadily go on to perfection, unless you get over this mistake. Let the Imperfectionists laugh at you for making humble resolutions; but go on, *steadfastly purposing to lead a new life*, as says our Church; and in order to this, *steadfastly purpose* to get a *new heart*, in the full sense of the word; for so long as your heart continues partly *unrenewed*, your life will be partly *unholy*. And therefore St. James justly observes, that *if any man offend not in word he is a perfect man*, he loves God with all his heart, his heart is *fully renewed*; it being impossible that a heart still tainted in part with vanity and guile, should always dictate the words of sincerity and love. Your good resolutions need not fail: nor will they fail, if under a due sense of the fickleness and helplessness of your unassisted free will, you properly depend upon God's faithfulness and

assistance. However, should they fail, as they probably will do more than once, be not discouraged, but repent, search out the cause, and in the strength of *free grace*, let your assisted free will renew your evangelical purpose, till the Lord seals it with his mighty *fiat*, and says, *Let it be done to thee according to thy resolving faith*. It is much better to be laughed at as “poor creatures, who know nothing of themselves,” than to be deluded, as foolish virgins, who fondly imagine that their vessels are full of imputed oil. Take therefore the sword of the Spirit, and boldly cut this dangerous snare in pieces. Conscious of your impotence, and yet laying out your talent of free will, say with the prodigal son, *I will arise and go to my Father*:—Say with David, *I will love thee, O Lord my God*:—*I will behold thy face in righteousness*:—*I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress*;—*I will keep it, as it were, with a bridle*; *I have said, that I would keep thy word*:—*The proud, and they who are humble in an unscriptural way, have had me exceedingly in derision, but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart*.—*I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments*.—Say with St. Paul, *I am determined not to know any thing save Jesus, and him crucified*; and with Jacob, *I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me*! And, to sum up all good resolutions in one, if you are a member of the Church of England, say, “I have engaged to renounce all the vanities of this wicked world, all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and all the works of the devil: to believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and to keep God’s commandments all the days of my life;” that is, I have most solemnly resolved to be a perfect Christian. And this resolution I have publicly sealed by receiving the two sacraments upon it:—*Baptism*, after my parents and sponsors had laid me under this blessed vow; and *the Lord’s Supper*, after I had personally ratified, in the Bishop’s presence, what they had done. Nor do I only think that I am bound to keep this vow, but “*by God’s grace, so I will; and I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he has called me to this state of salvation [and Christian perfection;] and I pray unto him to give me his grace, that I may not only attain it, but also continue in the same unto my life’s end.*” Church Catechism.

“Much diligence [says Kempis] is necessary to him that will profit much. If he who firmly purposeth often faileth, what shall he do, who seldom or feebly purposeth any thing?” But, I say it again and again, do not lean upon your *free will*, and good purposes, so as to encroach upon the glorious pre-eminence of *free grace*. Let the first Gospel axiom stand invariably in its honourable place. Lay your principal stress upon *divine mercy*, and say with the good man whom

I have just quoted, "Help me, O Lord God, in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly."

In following this method, ye will do the two Gospel axioms justice : ye will so depend upon God's *free grace* as not to fall into *Pharisaic* running : and ye will so exert your own *free will*, as not to slide into *Antinomian* sloth. Your course lies exactly between these rocks. To pass these perilous straits your resolving heart must acquire a heavenly polarity. Through the spiritually magnetic touch of Christ the corner stone, your soul must learn to point towards *faith* and *works*, or if you please, towards a due submission to *free grace*, and a due exertion of *free will*, as the opposite ends of the needle of a compass point towards the *north* and the *south*.

6. From this direction flows the following advice. Resolve to be perfect in *yourselves*, but not of *yourselves*. The Antinomians boast that they are perfect only in their heavenly Representative. Christ was filled with perfect humility and love : they are perfect in his person : they need not a perfection of humble love in themselves. To avoid their error, be perfect in *yourselves*, and not in another : let your perfection of humility and love be inherent ; let it dwell in you. Let it fill your *own* heart, and influence your *own* life : so shall you avoid the delusions of the virgins, who give you to understand, that the oil of their perfection is all contained in the sacred vessel which formerly hung on the cross, and therefore their salvation is finished, they have oil enough in that rich vessel ; manna enough and to spare in that golden pot. Christ's heart was perfect, and therefore theirs may safely remain imperfect, yea, full of indwelling sin, till death, the messenger of the bridegroom, come to cleanse them, and fill them with perfect love at the midnight cry ! Delusive hope ! Can any thing be more absurd than for a sapless, dry branch, to fancy that it has sap and moisture enough in the vine which it cumbers ? Or for an impenitent adulterer to boast, that in the Lord he has chastity and righteousness ? Where did Christ ever say, *have salt in another* ? Does he not say, *Take heed that ye be not deceived* ?—*Have salt in yourselves*, Mark ix. 50 ? Does he not impute the destruction of stony ground hearers to their *not having root in themselves*, Matt. xiii. 21 ? If it was the patient man's comfort, that the root of the matter was found in him, is it not deplorable to hear modern believers say, without any explanatory clause, that they have nothing but sin in themselves ? But is it enough to have the root in ourselves ? Must we not also have the fruit—yea, be filled with the fruit of righteousness ? Phil. i. 11. Is it not St. Peter's doctrine where he says, *If these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of*

Christ? 2 Pet. i. 3. And is it not that of David, where he prays, *create in me a clean heart, &c.*? Away then, with all Antinomian refinements: and if, with St. Paul, you will have salvation and rejoicing in yourselves, and not in another; make sure of holiness and perfection in yourselves, and not in another.

But while you endeavour to avoid the snare of the Antinomians, do not run into that of the Pharisees, who will have their perfection of themselves; and therefore, by their own unevangelical efforts, self-concerted willings, and self-prescribed runnings, endeavour to raise sparks of their own kindling, and to warm themselves by their own painted fires and fruitless agitations. Feel your omnipotence. Own that no man has quickened [and perfected] his own soul. Be contented to invite, receive, and welcome the light of life: but never attempt to form, or to engross it. It is your duty to wait for the morning light, and to rejoice when it visits you: but if you grow so self-conceited as to say, "I will create a sun: *Let there be light*"—or if, when the light visits your eyes, you say, "I will bear a stock of light, I will so fill my eyes with light to-day, that to-morrow I shall almost be able to do my work without the sun, or at least without a constant dependence upon its beams;" would ye not betray a species of self-deifying idolatry, and Satanical pride? If our Lord himself, as *Son of man*, would not have one grain of human goodness himself; if he said, *Why callest thou me good? There is none good [self-good, or good of himself] but God.* Who can wonder enough at those proud Christians, who claim some self-originated goodness; boasting of what they have received, as if they had not received it; or using what they have received without an humble sense of their constant dependence upon their heavenly Benefactor? To avoid this horrid delusion of the Pharisees, learn to see, to feel, and to acknowledge, that of the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, are all your *Urim and Thummim*, your lights and perfections: and while the Lord says, *From me thy fruit is found*, Hos. xiv. 8. bow at his footstool, and gratefully reply, *Of thy fulness have all we received, and grace for grace*, John i. 16. For thou art the *Father of lights*, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, James i. 17.—*Of thee, and through thee, and to thee, are all things: to thee, therefore, be the glory for ever, Amen.* Rom. xi. 36.

7. You will have this humble and thankful disposition, if you let your repentance cast deeper roots. For if Christian perfection implies a forsaking of all inward, as well as outward sin: and if true repentance is a grace whereby we forsake sin, it follows, that to attain Christian perfection, we must so follow our Lord's evangelical precept, *Repent, for*

the kingdom of heaven is at hand, as to leave no sin—no bosom sin—no indwelling sin *unrepented of*, and of consequence *unforsaken*. He whose heart is still full of *indwelling sin*, has no more truly repented of indwelling sin, than the man whose mouth is still defiled with filthy talking and jesting, has truly repented of his ribaldry. The deeper our sorrow for, and detestation of, indwelling sin is, the more penitently do we confess the plague of our hearts, and when we properly confess it, we inherit the blessing promised in these words, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast. Look into the inward *chamber of imagery*, where assuming *self-love*, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, foolish desires, and wild imaginations, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart, which should be all flesh, is yet partly stone ; and that your soul, which should be only a temple for the Holy Ghost, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, a hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers,—for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love, and I know not how many of the evils which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief. Through grace detect these evils by a close attention to what passes in your own heart at all times, but especially in an hour of temptation. By frequent and deep confession, drag out all these abominations—these sins, which would not have Christ to reign alone over you, bring before him : place them in the light of his countenance ; and (if you do it in faith) that light, and the warmth of his love, will kill them, as the light and heat of the sun kill the worms which the plough turns up to the open air in a dry summer's day.

Nor plead that you can do nothing ; for, by the help of Christ, who is always ready to assist the helpless, ye can solemnly say upon your knees, what ye have probably said in an airy manner to your professing friends. If ye ever acknowledged to them that your heart is deceitful, prone to leave undone what ye ought to do, and ready to do what ye ought to leave undone ; ye can undoubtedly make the same confession to God. Complain to him who can help you, as ye have done to those who cannot. Lament, as you are able, the darkness of your mind, the stubbornness of your will, the dulness or exorbitancy of your affections, and importunately entreat the God of all grace to *renew a right spirit within you.* *If ye sorrow after this godly sort, what*

carefulness will be wrought in you ! What indignation ! What fear ! What vehement desire ! What zeal ! Yea, what revenge ! Ye will then sing in faith, what the Imperfectionists sing in unbelief :

O how I hate those lusts of mine,
That crucified my God :
Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh
Fast to the fatal wood !

Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart hath so decreed ;
Nor will I spare those guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed.

Whilst with a melting—broken heart,
My murder'd Lord I view,
I'll raise revenge against my sins,
And slay the murderers too.

8. Closely connected with this deep repentance is the practice of a judicious, universal self-denial. *If thou wilt be perfect*, says our Lord, *deny thyself ; take up thy cross daily ; and follow me. He that loveth father or mother, [much more he that loveth praise, pleasure, or money,] more than me, is not worthy of me : nay, Whosoever will save his life shall lose it : and whosoever will lose it for my sake shall find it.* Many desire to live and reign with Christ, but few choose to suffer and die with him. However, as the way of the cross leads to heaven, it undoubtedly leads to Christian perfection. To avoid the cross, therefore ; or to decline drinking the cup of vinegar and gall, which God permits your friends or foes to mix for you, is to throw away the aloes which Divine Wisdom puts to the breasts of the mother of harlots, to wean you from her and her witchcrafts : it is to refuse a medicine which is kindly prepared to restore your health and appetite—in a word, it is to renounce the Physician, who *heals all our infirmities*, when we take his bitter draughts, submit to have our imposthumes opened by his sharp lancet, and yield to have our proud flesh wasted away by his painful caustics. Our Lord *was made a perfect Saviour through sufferings*, and we may be made perfect Christians in the same manner. We may be called to suffer, till all that which we have brought out of spiritual Egypt is consumed in a howling wilderness, in a dismal Gethsemane, or on a shameful Calvary. Should this lot be reserved for us, let us not imitate our Lord's imperfect disciples, who *forsook him and fled* ; but let us stand the fiery trial, till all our fetters are melted, and our dross is purged away. Fire is of a purgative nature ; it separates the dross from

the gold : and the fiercer it is, the more quick and powerful is its operation. *He that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, &c. when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning.* Isa. iv. 4.—*I will bring the third part through the fire, saith the Lord, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried : they shall call on my name, and I will hear them : I will say, it is my people ; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* Zech. iii. 9. Therefore, if the Lord should suffer the best men in his camp, or the strongest men in Satan's army, to cast you into a furnace of fiery temptations, come not out of it till you are called. *Let patience have its perfect work : meekly keep your trying station, till your heart is disengaged from all that is earthly, and till the sense of God's preserving power kindles in you such a faith in his omnipotent love, as few experimentally know, but they who have seen themselves, like the mysterious bush in Horeb, burning, and yet unconsumed ; or they who can say with St. Paul, We are killed all the day long—dying, and behold we live !*

“Temptations (says *Kempis*) are often very profitable to men, though they be troublesome and grievous : for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed. All the saints have passed through, and profited by, many tribulations ; and they that could not bear temptations became reprobates, and fell away.”—“My son,” adds the author of *Ecclesiasticus*, chap. ii. 1. “if thou come to serve the Lord” in the perfect beauty of holiness, “prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright ; constantly endure, and make not haste in the time of trouble. Whatever is brought upon thee, take cheerfully ; and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate ; for gold is tried and purified in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.”—And therefore, says St. James, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he is tried [if he stands the fiery trial,] he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him, [with the love which endureth all things, i. e. with perfect love]* James i. 12. Patiently endure, then, when God for a season, [if need be] suffers you to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. By this mean, the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. i. 7.

9. Deep repentance is good, Gospel self-denial is excellent, and a degree of patient resignation in trials is of unspeakable use to attain the perfection of love ; but as faith immediately works by love, it is

of far more immediate use to purify the soul. Hence it is, that Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, so strongly insist upon *faith*; assuring us that *if we will not believe, we shall not be established*:—that *if we will believe we shall see the glory of God*:—*we shall be saved*:—and *rivers of living water shall flow from our inmost souls*;—and that *our hearts are purified by faith*;—and that *we are saved by grace through faith*. They tell us, that *Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it—by the word*; that *he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing*; but that *it should be holy and without blemish*. Now, if believers are to be cleansed and made without blemish by the word [which testifies of the all-atoning blood, and the love of the Spirit] it is evident that they are to be sanctified by *faith*; for *faith*, or *believing*, has as necessary a reference to the word as *eating* has to *food*.—For the same reason the apostle observes, that *they who believe enter into rest*;—that a *promise being given us to enter in, we should take care not to fall short of it through unbelief*;—that we ought to take warning by the Israelites, who *could not enter into the land of promise through unbelief*:—that *we are filled with all joy and peace in believing*; and that *Christ is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God through him*: now coming, in the Scripture language, is another expression for *believing*: *he that cometh to God [says the apostle] must believe*. Hence it appears, that *faith* is peculiarly necessary to those who will be *saved to the uttermost*,—especially a firm faith in the capital promise of the Gospel of Christ, the promise of the *Spirit of holiness* from the Father, through the Son. For, *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* Or, *How can they earnestly plead the truth, and steadily wait for the performance of a promise, in which they have no faith?*—This doctrine of *faith* is supported by Peter's words; *God, who knoweth the hearts [of penitent believers] bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost—and purifying their hearts by faith*, Acts xv. 8, 9. For the same *Spirit of faith*, which initially purifies our hearts when we cordially believe the *pardoning* love of God, completely cleanses them when we fully believe his *sanctifying* love.

10. This direction about *faith* being of the utmost importance, I shall confirm and explain it by an extract from Mr. Wesley's sermon, which points out *The Scripture Way of Salvation*. “Though it be allowed [says this judicious divine] that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree; for these fruits are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for

them, otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not sanctified till he believe. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified.—Not in the same sense; for this repentance and these fruits are only remotely necessary, necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is immediately and directly necessary to sanctification. It remains that *faith* is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to sanctification.

“But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love? It is a *divine evidence and conviction*, 1. That God hath promised it in the Holy Scriptures. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step further. And one would imagine there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this, than the ancient promise, *Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.* How clearly doth this express the being perfected in love? How strongly imply the being saved from all sin? For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?—2. It is a *divine evidence and conviction*, that what God has promised he is able to perform. Admitting therefore that *with men it is impossible* to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness: yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing *with God all things are possible*.—3. It is an *evidence and conviction*, that he is able and willing to do it *now*. And why not? Is not a moment to him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. We may therefore boldly say, at any point of time, *Now is the day of salvation! Behold! all things are now ready! Come to the marriage!*—4. To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more, a *divine evidence and conviction* that he doth it. In that hour it is done. God says to the inmost soul, *According to thy faith, be it unto thee!* Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; *it is clean from all unrighteousness.*”

Those who have low ideas of *faith*, will probably be surprised to see how much Mr. Wesley ascribes to that Christian grace, and to inquire why he so nearly connects our *believing that God cleanses us from all sin*, with *God's actual cleansing us*. But their wonder will cease, if they consider the definition which this divine gives of faith,

in the same sermon. "Faith, in general [says he] is defined by the apostle, an *evidence*, a divine *evidence* and *conviction* [the word used by the apostle means both] of things not seen : not visible, nor perceivable either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God and of the things of God, a kind of *spiritual light* exhibited to the soul, and a *supernatural sight*, or perception thereof: accordingly the Scriptures speak of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul, God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of the eyes of our understanding being opened. By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our souls both opened and enlightened, we see the things which the natural eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard. We have a prospect of the invisible things of God : we see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet is no more discerned by our natural faculties, than if it had no being ; and we see the *eternal world*, piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed."

From this striking definition of faith it is evident, that the doctrine of this address exactly coincides with Mr. Wesley's sermon ; with this verbal difference only, that what he calls *faith*, implying a twofold operation of the Spirit productive of *spiritual light*, and *supernatural sight* ! I have called *faith* apprehending a sanctifying baptism [or outpouring] of the Spirit. His mode of expression savours more of the rational divine, who logically divides the truth, in order to render its several parts conspicuous : and I keep closer to the words of the Scriptures, which, I hope, will frighten no candid Protestant. I make this remark for the sake of those who fancy, that, when a doctrine is clothed with expressions which are not quite familiar to them, it is a *new doctrine* : although these expressions should be as scriptural as those of a baptism, or outpouring of the Spirit, which are used by some of the prophets, by John the Baptist, by the four evangelists, and by Christ himself.

I have already pointed out the close connexion there is between an act of *faith*, which fully apprehends the sanctifying promise of the Father, and the power of the Spirit of Christ, which makes an end of moral corruption, by forcing the lingering man of sin *instantaneously* to breathe out his last. Mr. Wesley, in the above-quoted sermon, touches upon this delicate subject in so clear and concise a manner, that while his discourse is before me, for the sake of those who

have it not at hand, I shall transcribe the whole passage, and thus put the seal of that eminent divine to what I have advanced in the preceding pages, about sanctifying faith and the quick destruction of sin.

“ Does God work this great work in the soul *gradually* or *instantaneously*? Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some: I mean in this sense; they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin by the breath of his mouth, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does, a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. Thou therefore look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described; in all those good works, whereunto thou art created anew in Christ Jesus. There is then no danger: you can be no worse, if you are no better for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, ‘I must first be or do thus or thus.’ Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you expect it as you are: and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points, expect it by faith, expect it as you are, and expect it now! To deny one of them is to deny them all: to allow one is to allow them all. Do you believe we are sanctified by *faith*? Be true then to your principle; and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better, nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but *Christ died*. And if you look for it as you are, then expect it now. Stay for nothing: why should you? Christ is ready; and he is all you want. He is waiting for you: he is at the door! Let your inmost soul cry out,

“Come in, come in, thou heavenly guest!
Nor hence again remove;
But sup with me, and let the feast
Be everlasting love.”

11. *Social prayer* is closely connected with *faith*, in the capital promise of the sanctifying Spirit: and therefore I earnestly recom-

mend that mean of grace, where it can be had, as being eminently conducive to the attaining of Christian perfection. When many believing hearts are lifted up, and wrestle with God in prayer together, you may compare them to many diligent hands, which work a large machine. At such times, particularly, the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the windows of heaven are opened, and *rivers of living water flow* into the hearts of obedient believers.

“ In Christ when brethren join,
And follow after peace,
The fellowship divine
He promises to bless,
His chiefest graces to bestow
Where two or three are met below.

“ Where unity takes place,
The joys of heaven we prove ;
This is the Gospel grace,
The unction from above,
The Spirit on all believers shed,
Descending swift from Christ their head.”

Accordingly we read, that, when God powerfully opened the kingdom of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the disciples *were all with one accord in one place*. And when he confirmed that kingdom, they *were lifting up their voices to God with one accord*. See Acts ii. 1. and iv. 24. Thus also the believers at Samaria were filled with the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, while Peter and John prayed with them, and laid their hands upon them.

12. But perhaps thou art alone. As a solitary bird which sitteth on the house top, thou lookest for a companion who may go with thee through the deepest travail of the regeneration. But alas! thou lookest in vain : all the professors about thee seem satisfied with their former experiences, and with self-imputed or self-conceited perfection. When thou givest them a hint of thy want of power from on high, and of thy hunger and thirst after a fulness of righteousness, they do not sympathize with thee. And indeed how can they ? They are full already ; they reign without thee ; they have need of nothing. They do not sensibly want that *God would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they, being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend with all saints [perfected in love] what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 16, &c.* They

look upon thee as a whimsical person, full of singular notions, and they rather damp, than enliven thy hopes. Thy circumstances are sad ; but do not give place to despair, no not for a moment. In the name of Christ, who could not get even Peter, James, and John, to watch with him one hour ; and who was obliged to go through his agony alone ;—in his name, I say, *Cast not away thy confidence which has great recompense of reward.* Under all thy discouragements, remember that, after all, divine grace is not confined to numbers, any more than to a few. When all outward helps fail thee, make the more of Christ, on whom sufficient help is laid for thee,—Christ, who says, *I will go with thee, through fire and water :* the former shall *not burn thee*, nor the latter *drown thee*. Jacob was alone when he wrestled with the angel, yet he prevailed : and if the servant is not above his master, wonder not that it should be said of thee, as of thy Lord, when he went through his greatest temptations, *Of the people there was none with him.*

Should thy conflicts *be with confused noise, with burning and fuel of fire ;* should thy *Jerusalem be rebuilt in troublous times ;* should the Lord *shake, not the earth only, but also heaven ;* should deep call unto deep at the noise of his water spouts ; should all his waves and billows go over thee ; should thy patience be tried to the uttermost ; remember how in years past thou hast tried the patience of God, nor be discouraged : an extremity, and a storm, are often God's opportunity. A blast of temptation, and a shaking of all thy foundations, may introduce the fulness of God to thy soul, and answer the end of the rushing wind, and of the shaking, which formerly accompanied the first great manifestations of the Spirit. The Jews still expect the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, and they particularly expect it in a storm. When lightnings flash, when thunders roar, when a strong wind shakes their houses, and the tempestuous sky seems to rush down in thunder showers : then some of them particularly open their doors and windows to entertain their wished for deliverer. Do spiritually, what they do carnally. Constantly wait for full *power from on high ;* but especially when a storm of affliction, temptation, or distress, overtakes thee ; or when thy convictions and desires raise thee above thyself, as the waters of the flood raised Noah's ark above the earth ; then be particularly careful to throw the door of *faith*, and the window of *hope* as wide open as thou canst ; and spreading the arms of thy imperfect *love*, say with all the ardour and resignation which thou art master of,

My heart strings groan with deep complaint,
My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee ;

And every limb, and every joint,
Stretches for perfect purity.

But if the Lord be pleased to come softly to thy help; if he make an end of thy corruptions by helping thee gently to sink to unknown depths of meekness: if he drown the indwelling man of sin by baptizing, by plunging him into an abyss of humility; do not find fault with the simplicity of his method, the plainness of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like *Naaman*, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for, when he was wrath and said, *Behold I thought he will surely come out to me—and stand—and call on his God—and strike his hand over the place—and recover the leper.* Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work: and by this mean he disconcerts all our preconceived notions and schemes of deliverance. ‘*Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul,*—the sweet rest of Christian perfection, of perfect humility, resignation and meekness. Lie at my feet, as she did who loved much, and was meekly taken up with the good part, and the one thing needful:’ But thou frettest: thou despisest this robe of perfection: it is too plain for thee: thou slightest the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God, is of great price: nothing will serve thy turn but ■ tawdry coat of many colours, which may please thy proud self-will, and draw the attention of others, by its glorious and flaming appearance; and it must be brought to thee with *lightnings, thunderings, and voices.* If this be thy disposition, wonder not at the divine wisdom, which thinks fit to disappoint thy lofty prejudices; and let me address thee as *Naaman’s* servants addressed him: *My brother, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he says to thee, ‘I am the meek and lowly Lamb of God: wash in the stream of my blood—plunge in the Jordan of my humility, and be clean?’* Instead therefore of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his lowest appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily make an end of thy sin by gently coming in a still, small voice, as by rushing in upon thee in a storm, a fire, or an earthquake. The Jews rejected their Saviour, not so much because they did not earnestly desire his coming, as because he did not come in the manner in which they expected him. It is probable that some of this Judaism cleaves to thee. If thou wilt absolutely come to mount Sion in ■ triumphal chariot, or make thine entrance into the new Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come

there. Leave then all thy worldly misconceptions behind; and humbly follow thy king, who makes his entry into the typical Jerusalem *meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, yea, upon a colt, the foal of an ass.* I say it again therefore, whilst thy faith and hope strongly insist on the blessing, let thy resignation and patience leave to God's infinite goodness and wisdom the peculiar manner of bestowing it. When he says, *Surely I come quickly to make my abode with thee,* let thy faith close in with his word: ardently and yet meekly embrace his promise. This will instantly beget power; and with that power thou mayest instantly bring forth prayer, and possibly the prayer which opens heaven, which humbly wrestles with God, inherits the blessing, and turns the well known petition, *Amen, Even so, Come Lord Jesus!* into the well known praises, *He is come, He is come, O praise the Lord, O my soul, &c.*—Thus repent, believe, and obey; and *he that cometh will come with a fulness of pure, meek, humble love; he will not tarry; or if he tarry, it will be to give thy faith and desires more time to open, that thou mayest, at his appearing, be able to take in more of his perfecting grace and sanctifying power: besides, thy expectation of his coming, is of a purifying nature, and gradually sanctifies thee. He that has this hope in him, by this very hope purifies himself even as God is pure: for we are saved [into perfect love] by hope, as well as by faith.* The stalk, as well as the root, bears the full corn in the ear.

Up then, thou sincere expectant of God's kingdom! Let thy humble, ardent free will meet prevenient, sanctifying free grace in its weakest and darkest appearance, as the father of the faithful met the Lord, *when he appeared to him on the plain of Mamre as a mere mortal. Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: so does free grace [if I may venture upon the allusion] invite itself to thy tent: nay, it is now with thee in its creating, redeeming, and sanctifying influences. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground. Go and do likewise: if thou seest any beauty in the humbling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sanctifying love of God, and in the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Ghost, let thy free will run to meet them, and bow itself towards the ground. O for a speedy going out of thy tent—thy sinful self? O for a race of desire in the way of faith! O for incessant prostrations! O for a meek and deep bowing of thyself before thy divine Deliverer!—And Abraham said, my Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.—O for the humble pressing of a loving faith! O for the faith which stopt the sun, when God avenged his people in the days of*

Joshua; O for the importunate faith of the two disciples, who detained Christ, when he made as though he would have gone farther! They constrained him saying, abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.—He soon indeed vanished out of their bodily sight, because they were not called always to enjoy his bodily presence. Far from promising them that blessing, he had said, *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you—that he may abide with you for ever.*—He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. This promise is yea and amen in Christ; only plead it according to the preceding directions, and as sure as our Lord is the true and faithful witness, so sure will the God of hope and love soon fill you with all joy and peace, that ye may abound in pure love as well as in confirmed hope *through the power of the Holy Ghost.* Then shall you have an indisputable right to join the believers who sing at the Tabernacle, and at the Lock Chapel, in the words of Messrs. J. and C. Wesley.

“Many are we now, and one,
 We who Jesus have put on.
 There is neither bond nor free,
 Male nor female, Lord, in thee.
 Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
 Rendered all distinctions void:
 Names, and sects, and parties, fall;
 Thou, O Christ, art all in all.”

In the mean time you may sing with the pious Countess of *Huntingdon*—the Rev. Mr. *Madan*—the Rev. Dr. *Conyers*—the Rev. Mr. *Berridge*—*Richard Hill, Esq.*; and the Imperfectionists, who use their collections of hymns;—ye may sing, I say, with them all, the two following hymns which they have agreed to borrow from the hymns of Messrs. J. and C. Wesley, after making some insignificant alterations. I transcribe them from the collection used in Lady *Huntingdon's* chapels, Bristol edition, 1765, page 239, &c.

O for a heart to praise my God!
 A heart from sin set free;
 A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
 So freely spilt for me.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
 My dear Redeemer's throne,
 Where only Christ is heard to speak,
 Where Jesus reigns alone.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
 Believing, true, and clean,
 Which neither life nor death can part
 From Him that dwells within.

A heart in every thought renewed,
 And filled with love divine;
 Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
 A copy, Lord, of thine.

My heart, thou know'st, can never rest,
 Till thou create my peace:
 Till of mine Eden re-possess,
 From self and sin I cease.

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart,
 Come quickly from above;
 Write thy new name upon my heart,
 Thy new, best name of love.

Here is undoubtedly an evangelical prayer for the love which restores the soul to a state of sinless rest, and evangelical perfection. Mean ye, my brethren, what the good people who dissent from us print and sing, and I ask no more. Nor can ye wait for an answer to the prayer contained in the preceding hymn in a more scriptural manner, than by pleading the *promise of the Father* in such words as these :

Love divine, all loves excelling,
 Joy of heaven to earth come down !
 Fix in us thine humble dwelling,
 All thy faithful mercies crown;
 Jesus, thou art all compassion,
 Pure, unbounded love thou art;
 Visit us with thy salvation,
 Enter every trembling heart !

Breathe, O breathe thy loving spirit
 Into every troubled breast !
 Let us all in thee inherit,
 Let us find thy* promised rest.
 Take away the † power of sinning,
 Alpha and Omega be;
 End of faith as its beginning,
 Set our hearts at liberty.

* Mr. Wesley says, *second rest*, because an imperfect believer enjoys a first inferior rest : if he did not he would be no believer.

† Is not this expression too strong? Would it not be better to soften it as Mr. Hill has done, by saying, "Take away the love of" [or the bent to] "sinning?" Can God take away from us our power of sinning, without taking away our power of free obedience?

Come ! almighty to deliver,
 Let us all thy life receive !
 Suddenly return, and never,
 Never more thy temples leave !
 Thee we would be always blessing,
 Serve thee as thine hosts above ;
 Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
 Glory in thy precious* love.

Finish then thy new creation,
 Pure, † unspotted may we be ;
 Let us see thy great salvation,
 Perfectly restor'd by thee ;
 Chang'd from glory into glory,
 Till in heaven we take our place ;
 Till we cast our crowns before thee,
 Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Lift up your hands which hang down ; our Aaron, our heavenly High Priest, is near to hold them up. The spiritual Amalekites will not always prevail ; our Samuel, our heavenly Prophet, is ready to *cut them and their king in pieces before the Lord*. The promise is unto you. You are surely called to attain the perfection of your dispensation, although you seem still afar off. Christ, in whom that perfection centres—Christ, from whom it flows, is very near, even at the door ; *Behold*, says he, [and this he spake to Laodicean loiterers] *I stand at the door and knock*. *If any man hear my voice, and open, I will come in and sup with him*, upon the fruits of my grace, in their Christian perfection : and he shall sup with me upon the fruits of my glory, in their angelical and heavenly maturity.

* Mr. Wesley says *perfect love*, with St. John.

† Mr. Wesley says indeed *pure and sinless* ; but when Mr. Hill sings *pure unspotted*, he does not spoil the sense. For every body knows that the pure, unspotted Jesus, does not differ from the sinless, immaculate Lamb of God. This fine hymn (I think) is not in Mr. Madan's collection, but he has probably sung it more than once. However, it is adopted in the Shrewsbury Collection, of which Mr. Hill is the publisher in conjunction with Mr. De Courcy. Is it not suprising, that in his devotional warmth that gentleman should print, give out, and sing, Mr. Wesley's strongest hymns for Christian perfection ; when, in his controversial heat, he writes so severely against this blessed state of heart ? And may not I take my leave of him by an allusion to our Lord's words, *Out of thy own mouth—thy own pen—thy own publications—thy own hymns—thy own prayers—thy own Bible—thy own reason—thy own conscience—and (what is most astonishing) thy own profession and baptismal vow, I will judge thy mistakes !* Nevertheless, I desire the reader to impute them, as I do, not to any love for indwelling sin, but to the fatal error which makes my pious opponent turn his back upon the genuine doctrines of grace and justice, and espouse the spurious doctrines of Calvinian grace, and free wrath.

Hear this encouraging Gospel,—*Ask; and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If any of you [believers] lack wisdom—indwelling wisdom, [Christ, the wisdom and the power of God dwelling in his heart by faith] let him ask of God, who giveth to all men, and upbraideth not—and it shall be given him. But let him ask [as a believer,] in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed: for let not that man think that he shall receive the thing which he thus asketh. But whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. For, all things [commanded and promised] are possible to him that believeth. He who has commanded us to be perfect in love, as our heavenly Father is perfect, and he who has promised speedily to avenge his elect, who cry to him night and day:—He will speedily avenge you of your grand adversary, indwelling sin. He will say to you—According to thy faith, be it done unto thee; for he is able to do far exceedingly abundantly, far above all that we can ask or think; and of his fulness we may all receive grace for grace—we may all witness the gracious fulfilment of all the promises which he has graciously made, that by them we might be partakers of the Divine nature, so far as it can be communicated to mortals in this world. You see that, with men, what you look for is impossible: but you show yourselves believers: take God into the account, and you will soon experience, that with God all things are possible. Nor forget the Omnipotent Advocate whom you have with him. Behold! he lifts his once-pierced hands, and says, *Father, sanctify them through [thy loving] truth—that they may be perfected in love: and showing to you the fountain of atoning blood, and purifying water, whence flow the streams which cleanse and gladden the hearts of believers, he says, “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name—Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask then that your joy may be full. If I try your faith by a little delay; if I hide my face for a moment, it is only to gather you with everlasting kindness.—A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy. Now ye have sorrow—but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. In that day ye shall ask me no question, for you shall not have my bodily presence.—But my Urim and Thummim will be with you; and the Spirit of truth will himself lead you into all [Christian] truth.”**

O for a firm and lasting faith,
 To credit all the Almighty saith,
 To embrace the promise of his Son,
 And feel the Comforter our own!

In the mean time be not afraid to give glory to God by *believing in hope against hope*. Stagger not at the promise [of the Father and the Son] *through unbelief*: but trust the power and faithfulness of your Creator and Redeemer, till your Sanctifier has fixed his abode in your heart. Wait at Mercy's door, as the lame beggar did at the beautiful gate of the temple. *Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us: and he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something of them.* Do so too: give heed to the Father in the Son, who says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved.* Expect to receive the one thing now needful for you, a fulness of the sanctifying Spirit. And though your patience may be tried, it shall not be disappointed. The faith and power, which at Peter's word, gave the poor cripple a perfect soundness in the presence of all the wondering Jews, will give you, at Christ's word, a perfect soundness of heart in the presence of all your adversaries.

"Faith—mighty faith, the promise sees,
 And looks to that alone,
 Laughs at impossibilities,
 And cries—"It shall be done!"

"Faith asks impossibilities;
 Impossibilities are given;
 And I—e'en I, from sin shall cease,
 Shall live on earth the life of heaven."

Faith always *works by love*—by love of desire at least; making us ardently pray for what we believe to be eminently desirable. And if Christian perfection appears so to you, you might perhaps express your earnest desire of it in some such words as these—"How long, Lord, shall my soul—thy spiritual temple, be a den of thieves, or a house of merchandise?—How long shall vain thoughts profane it, as the buyers and sellers profaned thy temple made with human hands? How long shall evil tempers lodge within me? How long shall unbelief, formality, hypocrisy, envy, hankering after sensual pleasure, indifference to spiritual delights, and backwardness to painful or ignominious duty, harbour there? How long shall these sheep and doves, yea, these goats and serpents, defile my breast, which should be pure as the Holy of Holies?—How long shall they hinder me from

being one of the worshippers whom thou seekest—one of those who worship thee in spirit and in truth? O help me to take away these cages of unclean birds. *Suddenly come to thy temple.* Turn out all that offends the eyes of thy purity; and destroy all that keeps me out of *the rest which remains* for thy Christian people: so shall I keep a spiritual Sabbath—a Christian Jubilee to the God of my life: so shall I witness my share in the *oil of joy* with which thou anointest perfect Christians above their fellow-believers.—I stand in need of that oil, Lord: my lamp burns dim: sometimes it seems to be even gone out, as that of the foolish virgins; it is more like a *smoking flax*, than a *burning and shining light*. O! quench it not: raise it to a flame. Thou knowest that I do believe in thee. The trembling hand of my faith holds thee; and though I have ten thousand times grieved thy pardoning love, thine everlasting arm is still under me, to redeem my life from destruction; while thy right hand is over me, to crown me with mercies and loving kindness. But, alas! I am neither sufficiently thankful for thy present mercies, nor sufficiently athirst for thy future favours. Hence I feel an aching void in my soul, being conscious that I have not attained the heights of grace described in thy word, and enjoyed by thy holiest servants. Their deep experiences, the diligence and ardour with which they did thy will; the patience and fortitude with which they endured the cross, reproach me, and convince me of my manifold wants. I want *power from on high*;—I want the penetrating lasting *unction of the Holy One*: I want to have my vessel [my capacious heart] full of oil, which makes the countenance of wise virgins cheerful. I want a lamp of heavenly illumination, and a fire of divine love burning day and night in my breast, as the typical lamps did in the temple, and the sacred fire on the altar;—I want a full application of the blood which cleanses from all sin, and a strong faith in thy sanctifying word—a *faith* by which thou mayest dwell in my heart, as the unwavering hope of glory, and the fixed object of my love. I want the internal Oracle—thy still, small voice, together with *Urim and Thummim**—*the new name which none knoweth but he that receiveth it*. In a word, Lord, I want a plenitude of thy Spirit, the full promise of the Father, and the rivers which flow from the inmost souls of the believers, who have gone on to the perfection of their dispensation. I do believe that thou canst and wilt thus *baptize me with the Holy Ghost and with fire*: help my unbelief; confirm and increase my faith, with regard to this important baptism. Lord, I have need to be thus baptized of thee, and I am straitened till this baptism is accomplished. By thy baptisms of tears

* Two Hebrew words which mean *lights* and *perfections*.

in the manger—of water in Jordan—of sweat in Gethsemane—of blood and fire, and vapour of smoke, and flaming wrath on Calvary, baptize—O, baptize my soul, and make as full an end of the original sin which I have from Adam, as thy last baptism made of the likeness of sinful flesh which thou hadst from a daughter of Eve. Some of thy people look at death for full salvation from sin; but, at thy command, Lord, I look unto thee. *Say to my soul, I am thy salvation:* and let me feel with my heart, as well as see with my understanding, that thou canst *save from sin to the uttermost all that come to God through thee.* I am tired of forms, professions, and orthodox notions: so far as they are not pipes or channels to convey life, light, and love to my dead, dark, and stony heart. Neither the plain letter of thy Gospel, nor the sweet foretastes and transient illuminations of thy Spirit, can satisfy the large desires of my faith. Give me thine abiding Spirit, that he may continually shed abroad thy love in my soul. Come, O Lord, with that blessed Spirit:—Come Thou, and thy Father, in that holy Comforter—Come to make your abode with me; or I shall go meekly mourning to my grave.—Blessed mourning! Lord increase it. I had rather wait in tears for thy fulness, than wantonly waste the fragments of thy spiritual bounties, or feed with Laodicean contentment upon the tainted manna of my former experiences. Righteous Father, *I hunger and thirst after thy righteousness:* send thy holy Spirit of promise to fill me therewith, to sanctify me throughout, and to *seal me centrally to the day of eternal redemption,* and finished salvation. *Not for works of righteousness which I have done, but of thy mercy, for Christ's sake, save thou me by the complete washing of regeneration, and the full renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And in order to this, pour out of thy Spirit; shed it abundantly on me, till the fountain of living water abundantly spring up in my soul, and I can say, in the full sense of the words, that thou *livest in me, that my life is hid with thee in God,* and that *my spirit is returned to him that gave it*—To thee, *The First and the Last*—my Author and my End—my God and my All!”

SECTION XX.

An Address to perfect Christians.

YE have not sung the preceding hymns in vain, O ye men of God, who have mixed faith with your evangelical requests. The God who says, *open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*—The gracious God who

declares, *Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled*:—that faithful, covenant-keeping God, has now filled you with all righteousness, peace, and joy in believing. The brightness of Christ's appearing has destroyed the indwelling man of sin. He who had slain the lion and the bear [he who had already done so great things for you] has now crowned all his blessings by slaying the Goliath within. Aspiring, unbelieving self, is fallen before the victorious Son of David. The quick and powerful word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, has pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The carnal mind is cut off: the circumcision of the heart, through the Spirit, has fully taken place in your breasts; and now that mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus—ye are spiritually minded: loving God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourselves, ye are full of goodness, ye keep the commandments, ye observe the law of liberty, ye fulfil the law of Christ. Of him ye have learned to be meek and lowly in heart. Ye have fully taken his yoke upon you; in so doing ye have found a sweet, abiding rest unto your souls; and from blessed experience ye can say, "Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light. His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies. The beatitudes are sensibly yours: and the charity described by St. Paul has the same place in your breasts, which the tables of the law had in the ark of the covenant. Ye are the living temples of the Trinity: the Father is your life; the Son your light; the Spirit your love; ye are truly baptized into the mystery of God; ye continue to drink into one spirit, and thus ye enjoy the grace of both sacraments. There is an end of your *Lo here!* and *Lo there*; the kingdom of God is now established within you. Christ's righteousness, peace, and joy, are rooted in your breasts by the Holy Ghost given unto you, as an abiding guide and indwelling Comforter. Your introverted eye of faith looks at God, who gently guides you with his eye into all the truth necessary to make you do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Simplicity of intention keeps darkness out of your mind, and purity of affection keeps wrong fires out of your breast. By the former ye are without guile, by the latter ye are without envy. Your passive will instantly melts into the will of God; and on all occasions you meekly say, *Not my will, O Father, but thine be done*: thus ye are always ready to suffer what you are called to suffer. Your active will evermore says, *Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth: what wouldst thou have me to do?* It is my meat and drink to do the will of my heavenly Father; thus are

ye always ready to do whatsoever ye are convinced that God calls you to do ; and *whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat, or drink, or do any thing else, ye do all to the glory of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: rejoicing evermore; praying without ceasing—in every thing giving thanks: solemnly looking for, and hasting unto the hour of your dissolution, and the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and your soul, being clothed with a celestial body, shall be able to do celestial services to the God of your life.*

In this blessed state of Christian perfection, the holy anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, unless it be as the same anointing teacheth. Agreeably therefore, to that anointing, which teaches by a variety of means, which formerly taught a prophet by an *ass*, and daily instructs God's children by the *ant*, I shall venture to set before you some important directions, which the Holy Ghost has already suggested to your pure minds ; for I would not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, and giving you some hints, which it is safe for you frequently to meditate upon.

I. Adam, ye know, lost his human perfection in *Paradise* ; Satan lost his angelic perfection in *heaven* ; the devil thrust sore at Christ in the wilderness, to throw him down from his mediatorial perfection : and St. Paul, in the same Epistles where he professes not only *Christian*, but *apostolic* perfection also [Phil. iii. 15. 1 Cor. ii. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 11.] informs us, that he continued to run for the crown of heavenly perfection, like a man, who might not only lose his crown of *Christian* perfection, but become a reprobate, and be cast away, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. And therefore, so run ye also, that no man take your crown of *Christian* perfection in this world, and that ye may obtain your crown of angelic perfection in the world to come. Still keep your body under. Still guard your senses. Still watch your own heart, and steadfast in the faith, still resist the devil that he may flee from you ; remembering that if Christ himself, as son of man, had conferred with flesh and blood, refused to deny himself, and avoided taking up his cross, he had lost his perfection, and sealed up our original apostacy.

“ We do not find,” [says Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*] “ any general state described in Scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this is impossible, it would be that of those who are sanctified, who are Fathers in Christ, who rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and

in every thing give thanks. But it is not impossible for these to draw back. They who are sanctified may yet fall and perish, Heb. x. 29. Even *fathers in Christ* need that warning, *Love not the world*, 1 John ii. 15. They who *rejoice, pray, and give thanks without ceasing*, may nevertheless *quench the Spirit*, 1 Thess. v. 16. &c. Nay, even they who are *sealed unto the day of redemption*, may yet *grieve the Holy Spirit of God*, Eph. v. 30.*

The doctrine of the *Absolute Perseverance of the Saints*, is the first card which the devil played against man: "*Ye shall not surely die, if ye break the law of your perfection.*" This fatal card won the game. Mankind and Paradise were lost. The artful serpent had too well succeeded at his first game, to forget that lucky card at his second. See him *transforming himself into an angel of light on the pinnacle of the temple*. There he plays over again his old game against the Son of God. Out of the Bible he pulls the very card which won our first parents, and swept the stake—Paradise—yea, swept it with the besom of destruction—*Cast thyself down*, says he, *for it is written*, that all things shall work together for thy good, thy very falls not excepted; *He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone*: the tempter, thanks be to Christ, lost the game at that time, but he did not lose his card: and it is probable that he will play it round against you all; only with some variation. Let me mention one among a thousand. He promised our Lord that God's angels should *bear him up in their hands, if he threw himself down*: and it is not unlikely that he will promise you greater things still. Nor should I wonder if he was bold enough to hint, that, when you cast yourselves down, *God himself shall bear you up in his HANDS, yea in his ARMS of everlasting love*. O ye men of God, learn wisdom by the fall of *Adam*. O ye anointed sons of the Most High, learn watchfulness by the conduct of Christ. If he was afraid to *tempt the Lord his God*, will ye dare to do it? If he rejected, as poison, the hook of the *Absolute Perseverance of the Saints*, though it was

* We do not hereby deny, that some believers have a testimony in their own breasts, that they shall not finally fall from God. "They may have it," says Mr. Wesley in the same Tract, "and this persuasion, that *neither life nor death shall separate them from God*, far from being hurtful, may in some circumstances be extremely useful." But wherever this testimony is divine, it is attended with that grace which inseparably connects holiness and good works, the means, with perseverance and eternal salvation, the end: and, in this respect, our doctrine widely differs from that of the Calvinists, who break the necessary connexion between holiness and infallible salvation, by making room for the foulest falls—for adultery, murder, and incest.

baited with Scripture, will ye swallow it down, as if it were *honey out of the Rock of ages*?—No: *through faith in Christ, the Scriptures have made you wise unto salvation*: you will not only flee with all speed from evil, but from the very appearance of evil: and when you stand on the brink of a temptation, far from entering into it, under any pretence whatever, ye will leap back into the bosom of him who says, *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; for though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak*. I grant that, evangelically speaking, the weakness of the flesh is not sin; but yet the deceitfulness of sin creeps in at this door; and in this way not a few of God's children, after they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the sanctifying knowledge of Christ, under plausible pretences, have been entangled again therein and overcome. Let their falls make you cautious. Ye have put on the whole armour of God: O keep it on, and use it with all prayer, that ye may to the last, stand complete in Christ, and be more than conquerors through him that has loved you.

II. Remember that every one who is perfect, shall be as his Master. Now if your Master was tempted and assaulted to the last;—if, to the last he watched and prayed; using all the means of grace himself, and enforcing the use of them upon others;—if to the last he fought against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and did not put off the harness till he had put off the body: think not yourselves above him; but go and do likewise. If he did not regain Paradise without going through the most complete renunciation of all the good things of this world, and without meekly submitting to the severe stroke of his last enemy, death; be content to be perfect as he was: nor fancy that your flesh and blood can inherit the celestial kingdom of God, when the flesh and blood which Emmanuel himself assumed from a pure virgin, could not inherit it without passing under the cherub's flaming sword: I mean, without going through the gates of death.

III. Ye are not complete in wisdom. Perfect love does not imply perfect knowledge; but perfect humility, and perfect readiness to receive instruction. Remember therefore, that if ever ye show, that ye are above being instructed, even by a fisherman who teaches according to the divine anointing, ye will show that ye are fallen from a perfection of humility, into a perfection of pride.

IV. Do not confound angelical, with Christian perfection. Uninterrupted transports of praise, and ceaseless raptures of joy, do not belong to Christian, but to angelical perfection. Our feeble frame can bear but a few drops of that glorious cup. In general, that new wine is too strong for our old bottles; that power is too excellent for

our *earthen*, cracked vessels ; but weak as they are, they can bear a fulness of *meekness*, of *resignation*, of *humility*, and of that *love* which is willing to *obey unto death*. If God indulge you with ecstasies, and extraordinary revelations ; be thankful for them ; but be not *exulted above measure by them* : take care lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them : and remember, that your *Christian* perfection does not so much consist in *building a tabernacle* upon mount *Tabor*, to rest and enjoy rare sights there ; as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud *Caiaphas*, to the judgment-hall of an unjust *Pilate*, and to the top of an ignominious *Calvary*. Ye never read in your Bibles, “ Let that glory be upon you, which was also upon St. Stephen, when he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.” But ye have frequently read there, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

See him on that ignominious gibbet : he hangs—abandoned by his friends—surrounded by his foes—condemned by the rich—insulted by the poor!—He hangs ;—a worm and no man—a very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people!—All that see him laugh him to scorn ! They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, “ He trusted in God that he would deliver him ; let him deliver him, if he will have him.”—There is none to help him :—one of his apostles denies, another sells him ; and the rest run away. Many oxen are come about him :—fat bulls of Bashan close him on every side—they gape upon him with their mouths, as it were a ramping lion :—he is poured out like water—his heart in the midst of his body is like melting wax :—his strength is dried up like a potsherd :—his tongue cleaveth to his gums :—he is going into the dust of death :—many dogs are come about him :—and the counsel of the wicked layeth siege against him :—his hands and feet are pierced :—you may tell all his bones :—they stand staring and looking upon him :—they part his garments among them, and cast lots for the only remain of his property, his plain, seamless vesture. Both suns, the visible and the invisible, seem eclipsed. No cheering beam of created light gilds his gloomy prospect. No smile of his heavenly Father supports his agonizing soul ! No cordial, unless it be vinegar and gall, revives his sinking spirits ! He has nothing left, except his God. But his God is enough for him. In his God he has all things. And though his soul is seized

with sorrow, even unto death ; yet it hangs more firmly upon his God by a naked faith, than his lacerated body does on the cross by the clenched nails.—The perfection of his love shines in all its Christian glory. He not only forgives his insulting foes and bloody persecutors ; but, in the highest point of his passion, he forgets his own wants, and thirsts after their eternal happiness. Together with his blood, he pours out his soul for them, and excusing them all he says, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* O ye adult sons of God, in this glass behold all with open face the glory of your Redeemer's forgiving, praying love ; and, as ye behold it, be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the loving Spirit of the Lord.

V. This lesson is deep ; but he may teach you one deeper still. By a strong sympathy with him in all his sufferings, he may call you to know him every way crucified. Stern Justice thunders from heaven, *Awake, O sword, against the man who is my fellow !* The sword awakes—the sword goes through his soul—the flaming sword is quenched in his blood. But is one sinew of his perfect faith cut, one fibre of his perfect resignation injured, by the astonishing blow ? No : his God slays him, and yet he trusts in his God. By the noblest of all ventures, in the most dreadful of all storms, he meekly bows his head, and shelters his departing soul in the bosom of his God.—“ *My God ! My God !* says he, though all my comforts have forsaken me, and all thy storms and waves go over me, yet *into thy hands I commend my spirit—For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand [where I shall soon sit] there are pleasures for evermore.*”—What a pattern of perfect confidence ! O ye perfect Christians, be ambitious to ascend to those amazing heights of Christ's perfection : *For even hereunto ARE ye called ; because Christ also suffered for us : leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps : who knew no sin, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* If this is your high calling on earth, rest not, O ye fathers in Christ, till your patient hope, and perfect confidence in God, have got their last victory over your last enemy—the king of terrors.

“ The ground of a thousand mistakes [says Mr. Wesley] is, the not considering deeply, that love is the highest gift of God, *humble, gentle, patient love* : that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love.—It were well you should be thoroughly

sensible of this : the heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion : there is, in effect, nothing else. If you look for any thing but *more love*, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, Have you received this or that blessing ? If you mean any thing but *more love*, you mean wrong ; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing but *more* of that love described in the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into Abraham's bosom."

VI. Love is humble. "*Be therefore clothed with humility*," says Mr. Wesley : "Let it not only fill, but cover you all over. Let modesty and self-diffidence appear in all your words and actions. Let all you speak and do show that you are little, and base, and mean, and vile in your own eyes. As one instance of this, be always ready to own any fault you have been in. If you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God : no, it will further it. Be therefore open and frank, when you are taxed with any thing : let it appear just as it is : and you will thereby not hinder but adorn the Gospel."—Why should ye be more backward in acknowledging your failings than in confessing that ye do not pretend to infallibility. St. Paul was perfect in the love which casts out fear, and therefore he boldly reprov'd the high-priest : but, when he had reprov'd him more sharply than the fifth commandment allows, he directly confessed his mistake, and set his seal to the importance of the duty in which he had been inadvertently wanting. Then Paul said, "I knew not, brethren, that he was the high-priest : for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." St. John was perfect in the courteous, humble love, which brings us down at the feet of all. His courtesy, his humility, and the dazzling glory, which beamed forth from a divine messenger [whom he apprehended to be more than a creature] betrayed him into a fault contrary to that of St. Paul ; but far from concealing it, he openly confessed it, and published his confession for the edification of all the churches. *When I had heard and seen*, says he, *I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant.* Christian perfection shines as much in the childlike simplicity with which the perfect readily acknow-

ledge their faults, as it does in the manly steadiness with which they *resist unto blood, striving against sin.*

VII. If humble love makes us frankly confess our faults, much more does it incline us to own ourselves sinners—miserable sinners before that God whom we have so frequently offended. I need not remind you, that your *bodies are dead because of sin.* You see, you feel it, and therefore, so long as you dwell in a prison of flesh and blood, which death, the avenger of sin, is to pull down;—so long as your final justification, as pardoned and sanctified sinners, has not taken place:—Yea, so long as you break the law of paradisiacal perfection, under which you were originally placed, it is meet, right, and your bounden duty, to consider yourselves as sinners, who, as transgressors of the law of innocence and the law of liberty, are guilty of death—of eternal death. St. Paul did so after he was *come to mount Sion, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.* He still looked upon himself as the chief of sinners, because he had been a daring blasphemer of Christ, and a fierce persecutor of his people. *Christ, says he, came to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* The reason is plain. Matter of fact is, and will be matter of fact to all eternity. According to the doctrines of Grace and Justice, and before the throne of God's mercy and holiness, a sinner pardoned and sanctified, must, in the very nature of things, be considered as a sinner; for if you consider him as a saint absolutely abstracted from the character of a sinner, how can he be a pardoned and sanctified sinner? To all eternity therefore, but much more while *death [the wages of sin]* is at your heels, and while ye are going to *appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive your final sentence of absolution or condemnation*; it will become you to say with St. Paul, *We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely [as sinners] by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ—although we are justified judicially as believers, through faith:—as obedient believers, through the obedience of faith; and as perfect Christians, through Christian perfection.*

VIII. Humble love *becomes all things [but sin] to all men*, although it delights most in those who are most holy. Ye may, and ought to set your love of peculiar complacency upon God's dearest children—upon those who *excel in virtue*; because they more strongly reflect the image of the God of love, the Holy One of Israel. But, if ye despise the weak, and are above lending them a helping hand; ye are fallen from Christian perfection, which teaches us to *bear one another's burdens, especially the burdens of the weak.* Imitate them

the tenderness and wisdom of the good Shepherd, who carries the lambs in his bosom, gently leads the sheep which are *big with young*, feeds with milk those who cannot bear strong meat, and says to his imperfect disciples, *I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

IX. *Where the loving Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* Keep therefore at the utmost distance from the shackles of a narrow, prejudiced, bigoted spirit. The moment ye confine your love to the people who think just as you do, and your regard to the preachers who exactly suit your taste, you fall from perfection, and turn bigots. "I entreat you, [says Mr. Wesley in his *Plain Account*] beware of bigotry. Let not your love or beneficence be confined to *Methodists* (so called) only : much less to that very small part of them who seem to be renewed in love : or to those who believe your's and their report. O make not this your *Shibboleth*."—On the contrary, as ye have time and ability, *do good to all men.* Let your benevolence shine upon all : let your charity send its cherishing beams towards all, in proper degrees. So shall ye be *perfect as your heavenly Father, who makes his sun to shine upon all ;* although he sends the brightest and warmest beams of his favour upon the household of faith, and reserves his richest bounties for those who lay out their five talents to the best advantage.

X. Love, pure love, is satisfied with the *supreme Good*—with *God*. "Beware then of desiring any thing but him. Now you desire nothing else. Every other desire is driven out : see that none enter in again. *Keep thyself pure : let your eye remain single, and your whole body shall remain full of light.* Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense ; no desire of pleasing the eye or the imagination : no desire of money, of praise, or esteem : of happiness in any creature. You may bring these desires back ; but you need not ; you may feel them no more. *O stand fast in the liberty where-with Christ hath made you free.* Be patterns to all of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure which does not bring you nearer to God ; nor regard any pain which does : that you simply aim at pleasing him, whether by *doing* or *suffering* : that the constant language of your heart, with regard to pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour, or poverty, is,

"All's alike to me, so I
In my Lord may live and die !"

XI. The best soldiers are sent upon the most difficult and dangerous expeditions : and as you are the best soldiers of Jesus Christ, ye will probably be called to drink deepest of his cup, and to carry the heaviest burdens. “ Expect contradiction and opposition,” says the judicious divine, whom I have just quoted, “ together with crosses of various kinds. Consider the words of St. Paul, *To you it is given in behalf of Christ*, for his sake, as a fruit of his death and intercession for you, *not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. i. 23. *It is given*. God gives you this opposition or reproach : it is a fresh token of his love. And will you disown the giver ? Or spurn his gift, and count it a misfortune ? Will you not rather say, ‘ Father, the hour is come that thou shouldst be glorified. Now thou givest thy child to suffer something for thee. Do with me according to thy will.’ Know that these things, far from being *hinderances* to the work of God, or to your soul, unless by your own fault, are not only unavoidable in the course of providence, but profitable, yea, necessary for you. Therefore receive them from God (not from chance) with willingness, and thankfulness. Receive them from men with humility, meekness, yieldingness, gentleness, sweetness.”

Love can never do, nor suffer too much for its divine object. Be then ambitious, like St. Paul, to be made perfect in *sufferings*. I have already observed that the apostle, not satisfied to be a perfect Christian, would also be a perfect martyr ; earnestly desiring to *know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings*. Follow him, as he followed his suffering, crucified Lord. Your feet are *shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*, run after them both in the race of obedience, for the crown of martyrdom, if that crown is reserved for you. And if ye miss the crown of those who are martyrs in *deed*, ye shall however receive the reward of those who are martyrs in *intention*—the crown of righteousness and angelical perfection.

XII. But do not so desire to follow Christ to the garden of *Gethsemane*, as to refuse to follow him *now* to the carpenter's shop, if Providence *now* call you to it. Do not lose the present day by idly looking back at *yesterday*, or foolishly antedating the cares of *to-morrow* : but wisely use every hour ; spending it as one who stands on the verge of time—on the border of eternity, and who has his work cut out by a wise Providence from moment to moment. Never therefore neglect using the two talents you have *now*, and doing the duty which is *now* incumbent upon you. Should ye be tempted to it, under the plausible pretence of waiting for a greater number of talents ; remember that God doubles our talents in the way of duty, and

that it is a maxim advanced by *Elisha Coles* himself, *use grace and have [more] grace*. Therefore, “to continual watchfulness and prayer, add continual employment, says Mr. *Wesley*, for grace flies a vacuum as well as nature : the devil fills whatever God does not fill.”

—“As by works faith is made perfect, so the completing or destroying of the work of faith, and enjoying the favour, or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depend on every single act of obedience.”—If you forget this, you will hardly do now whatsoever your hand findeth to do. Much less will you do it with *all* your might—for God—for eternity.

XIII. Love is modest : it rather inclines to bashfulness and silence, than to talkative forwardness. In ■ multitude of words there wanteth not sin ; be therefore slow to speak ; nor cast your pearls before those who cannot distinguish them from pebbles. Nevertheless, when you are solemnly called upon to bear testimony to the truth, and to say what great things God has done for you ; it would be cowardice or false prudence not to do it with humility. Be then always ready to give an answer to every man who [properly] asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness, [without fluttering anxiety] and with fear [with ■ reverential awe of God upon your minds] 1 Pet. iii.

15. Perfect Christians are burning and shining lights, and our Lord intimates, that, as a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all the house : so God does not light the candle of perfect love to hide it in ■ corner, but to give light to all those who are within the reach of its brightness. If diamonds glitter, if stars shine, if flowers display their colours, and perfumes diffuse their fragrance, to the honour of the Father of lights, and Author of every good gift : if, without self-seeking, they disclose his glory to the utmost of their power, why should ye not go, and do likewise ? Gold answers its most valuable end when it is brought to light, and made to circulate for charitable and pious uses ; and not when it lies concealed in a miser's strong box, or in the dark bosom of a mine. But when you lay out your spiritual gold for proper uses, beware of imitating the vanity of those coxcombs, who, as often as they are about to pay for ■ trifle, pull out a handful of gold, merely to make a show of their wealth.

XIV. Love or charity rejoiceth in the [display of an edifying] truth. Fact is fact all the world over. If you can say to the glory of God, that you are alive, and feel very well, when it is so ; why should you not also testify to his honour, that you live not, but that Christ liveth in you ; if you really find that this ■ your experience ? Did not St.

John say, *Our love is made perfect—because as he is, so are we in this world!* Did not St. Paul write, *The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit?* Did he not with the same simplicity aver, that although he had nothing, and was sorrowful, yet he possessed all things, and was always rejoicing?

Hence it appears, that with respect to the declaring or concealing what God has done for your soul, the line of your duty runs exactly between the proud forwardness of some stiff Pharisees, and the voluntary humility of some stiff mystics. The former vainly boast of more than they experience, and thus set up the cursed idol, *self*: the latter ungratefully hide the wonderful works of God, which the primitive Christians spoke of publicly in a variety of languages; and so refuse to exalt their gracious Benefactor, *Christ*. The first error is undoubtedly more odious than the second; but, what need is there of leaning to either? Would ye avoid them both? Let your *tempers* and *lives* always declare, that perfect love is attainable in this life. And when you have a proper call to declare it with your *lips* and *pens*, do it without forwardness, to the glory of God; do it with simplicity, for the edification of your neighbour; do it with godly jealousy, lest ye should show the treasures of divine grace in your hearts, with the same *self-complacency* with which king Hezekiah showed his treasures, and the golden vessels of the temple, to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, remembering what a dreadful curse this piece of vanity pulled down upon him: and *Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord, Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.* If God so severely punished Hezekiah's pride, how properly does St. Peter charge believers to *give with fear an account of the grace which is in them!* and how careful should ye be to observe this important charge!

XV. If you will keep at the utmost distance from the vanity which proved so fatal to good king Hezekiah, follow an excellent direction of Mr. Wesley. When you have done any thing for God, or received any favour from him, retire, if not into your closet, into your heart, and say, “I come, Lord to restore to thee what thou hast given, and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in thy presence, but a void, capable of being filled with thee and by thee, as the air which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun? Grant therefore, O Lord, that I may never appropriate thy grace to myself, any more than the air appropriates to

itself the light of the sun, which withdraws it every day to restore it the next; there being nothing in the air that either appropriates his light or resists it. O give me the same facility of receiving and restoring thy grace and good works! I say *thine*, for I acknowledge that the root from which they spring, is in thee and not in me.”—“The true means to be filled anew with the riches of grace, is thus to strip ourselves of it: without this it is extremely difficult not to faint in the practice of good works.”—“And therefore, that your good works may receive their last perfection, let them lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of our souls, or rather of God wherewith they shall be filled. And it is only what they had of earthly and mortal, which good works lose by this spiritual death.”

XVI. Would ye see this deep precept put in practice? Consider St. Paul. Already possessed of Christian perfection, he does good works from morning till night: he warns every one night and day with tears. He carries the Gospel from east to west. Wherever he stops, he plants a church at the hazard of his life. But instead of resting in his present perfection, and in the good works which spring from it, he grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; unweariedly following after, if that he may apprehend that [perfection] for which also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus,—that celestial perfection, of which he got lively ideas when he was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter. With what amazing ardour does he run his race of Christian perfection for the prize of that higher perfection! How does he forget the works of yesterday, when he lays himself out for God to-day! Though dead, he yet speaketh, nor can an address to perfect Christians be closed by a more proper speech than his. Brethren, says he, *Be followers of me—I count not myself to have apprehended [my evangelical perfection:] but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, [settling in none of my former experiences, resting in none of my good works,] and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the [celestial] prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. In the mean time you may sing the following hymn of the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, which is descriptive of the destruction of corrupt self-will.*

and expressive of the absolute resignation which characterizes a perfect believer.

To do, or not to do ; to have,
Or not to have, I leave to Thee ;
To be, or not to be, I leave ;
Thy only will be done in me ;
All my requests are lost in one,
Father, thy only will be done !

Suffice, that for the season past,
Myself in things divine I sought ;
For comforts cried with eager haste,
And murmur'd that I found them not ;
I leave it now to thee alone,
Father, thy only will be done !

Thy gifts I clamour for no more,
Or selfishly thy grace require,
An evil heart to varnish o'er ;
Jesus the Giver I desire ;
After the flesh no longer known ;
Father, thy only will be done !

Welcome alike the crown or cross,
Trouble I cannot ask, nor peace,
Nor toil, nor rest, nor gain, nor loss,
Nor joy, nor grief, nor pain nor ease,
Nor life, nor death ; but ever groan,
Father, thy only will be done !

This hymn suits all the believers who are at the bottom of mount Sion, and begin to join the spirits of just men made perfect. But when the triumphal chariot of perfect love *gloriously* carries you to the top of perfection's hill ; when you are raised far above the *common* heights of the perfect—when you are almost translated into glory like Elijah, *then* you may sing another hymn of the same Christian poet with the Rev. Mr. *Madan*, and the numerous body of Im-perfectionists who use his collection of Psalms, &c.

Who in Jesus confide,
They are bold to outride
All the storms of affliction beneath :
With the prophet they soar
To that heavenly shore,
And out-fly all the arrows of death.

By faith we are come
To our permanent home ;
And by hope we the rapture improve :

By love we still rise,
And look down on the skies—
For the heaven of heavens is love !

Who on earth can conceive
How happy we live
In the city of God the great King ?
What a concert of praise,
When our Jesus's grace
The whole heavenly company sing !

What a rapturous song,
When the glorified throng
In the spirit of harmony join !
Join all the glad choirs,
Hearts, voices, and lyres,
And the burden is mercy divine !

But when you cannot follow Mr. *Madan*, and the Imperfectionists of the Lock Chapel, to those rapturous heights of perfection, you need not give up your shield. You may still rank among the perfect, if you can heartily join in this version of Psalm cxxxi.

Lord, thou dost the grace impart !
Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
I shall as my Master be
Rooted in humility.

Now, dear Lord, that thee I know,
Nothing will I seek below,
Aim at nothing great or high,
Lowly both in heart and eye.

Simple, teachable, and mild,
Aw'd into a little child,
Quiet now without my food,
Wean'd from every creature good.

Hangs my new-born soul on thee,
Kept from all idolatry ;
Nothing wants beneath, above,
Resting in thy perfect love.

That your earthen vessels may be filled with this love till they break, and you enjoy the divine object of your faith without an interposing veil of gross flesh and blood, is the wish of one who sincerely praises God on your account, and ardently prays,

“ Make up thy jewels, Lord, and show
The glorious, spotless Church below :

'The fellowship of saints make known ;
And O, my God, might I be one !

O might my lot be cast with these,
The least of Jesu's witnesses !
O that my Lord would count me meet
To wash his dear disciples' feet !

To wait upon his saints below !
On Gospel errands for them go !
Enjoy the grace to angels given ;
And serve the royal heirs of heaven !

END OF VOL. IV.







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Fletcher, John, 1729-1785.
Checks to Antinomianism.

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